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RELIGION AND POETRY

By Reinhold Niebuhr

It has become fashionable to insist that there is no conflict between religion and science. The victories of science in the last centuries have been so enormous that religious leaders who tried to hold the interest of generations steeped in the scientific world view had no other recourse but to reiterate their conviction, usually quite honestly held, that science and religion, properly conceived have no quarrel with each other. The more the rearguard of religious orthodoxy embarrassed the modern defenders of the faith by their futile efforts to discredit the scientists, the more vigorously have the moderns insisted upon peace with science.

In one sense at least they have been servants of the truth in this insistence. It is impossible to maintain religious faith in the long run by basing it upon the insecure foundations of doubtful history and discredited cosmologies. Science is merely the application of human intelligence to the problem of discovering, analyzing and collating the observable facts in the cosmic process and in human history. Intelligence is not infallible and mistakes have been made and will be made in the scientific effort. But it is idle to judge the truth and falsity of any thesis emerging from scientific observation by its agreement or disagreement with the special interests of religious ideas and revelations. In that sense at least there can be no conflict between religion and science.

Nevertheless it is a too simple solution of the difficulties which religion faces in a scientific world to insist merely upon the desirability of a peace which obviously does not exist and to deprecate

a conflict which the obscurantists may have aggravated but which they did not create. The fact is that religion and science will always be in conflict to a certain extent. At least there will be always a measure of tension between them. The conflict is not between the conclusions at which religion and science arrive but between their varying tempers and methods. Science is analytical. It makes a careful analysis of detailed facts and attempts to explain their relation to each other. Religion has its eye not upon the details of life and the minutiae of reality; it is rather a poetic apperception and appreciation of the ottal meaning of reality. Science is in a sense microscopic and religion is telescopic. Religion has been defined by a contemporary philosopher as a "sense of the whole." The difference between the two may be illustrated by the difference between a psychiatric analysis of an individual and the loving appreciation of that individual. Psychoanalytical criticism of personality undoubtedly discovers truth about character which must forever escape the eyes of love, even though love is alleged to be clairvoyant. There are some things we can never know about personalities except a careful and scientific analysis of their behavior is made. Though such an analysis is sometimes very disillusioning it may on the other hand become the basis of a new and higher appreciation of an individual. On the other hand it can never issue in the kind of appreciation of the total meaning and value of a personality which it is the genius of love to gain. There is always a chance that love is based upon illusions which an exacter knowledge will dispell. Yet it would be wrong to regard love as a mere sentimentality to which scientific analysis is always superior. Love may be blind upon occasion but sometimes the blindness of love is merely the indifference to minute defects which a high appreciation of general worth is able to prompt.

While there are all types of love, some having a purely physical basis, it is not too much to say that love is essentially poetic and religious, not to say mystical, and that it is not only analagous to but typical of the religious appreciation of life and the cosmos itself. A religion which discovers the half-hidden purpose of life under its superficial chaos, which relates man to a universe with which he seems to be in conflict and which knows how to find values within the confusion of fortune is no less a tool of truth than the science which discovers so much about the details of reality that the very abundance of its knowledge makes the discovery of unities, harmonies, and values impossible. It may be admitted that religion can make greater mistakes than science. It is easier to chart the traffic of a city street and to take the census of a community than to arrive at any valid interpretation of the life and

the meaning of the total community. The generalizations and hypotheses of religion are bold and there are always facts which seem to contradict them. That is what easily leads scientists to hold the convictions of religion in contempt; and that also tempts the protagonists of religion to deny some indubitable facts established by science. There will always be a certain conflict between poets and scientists, between those who describe detailed facts and those who seek to apprehend total meanings. Yet the interests of truth demand that both continue in their pursuit of it.

Another reason for conflict is quite apparent. Intelligence deals with reality. Imagination deals with the potential as well as the real. A perfect love sees in the loved one not only what it is but what it may become. Religion, in a sense, gives us not a picture of the world as it is but the world as it ought to be. It is always possible that religion and poetry, that all the imaginative arts degenerate into sentimentality by obscuring unlovely reality in their anxiety to reveal potential beauties and values in life. Religion must therefore, for its own sake, be under the critical scrutiny of a realistic and unimaginative intelligence. There is always the possibility that we declare to be true what we would like to be true. On the other hand, every potentiality is in a sense a reality. Ideals which are implicit in reality are real and those who discover them help to make them so. Religion is therefore not only discovery but creation when it functions vitally. Not only the poet but the prophet helps to maintain religious vitality. Religion insists that life has meaning when obviously much of life is chaotic. But it achieves meaning through those who act upon the assumption that life can be lived by the guidance of a sublime purpose and that there are clues to this purpose in the cosmos itself. Religion insists that all men are brothers where it is obvious that men are enemies as much as they are brothers. Yet to regard society from the vantage of the assumption that it is a family helps to create those cooperatives attitudes which make it in truth a family.

The difference between religious truth and scientific truth might be defined as the difference between a description of what is and what ought to be and therefore may be. It is at this point that religion becomes more than poetry and relates itself to a moral adventure. At its best it does not only discover but it creates the kind of world which will satisfy man most. For a wholesome culture there must be tension between the scientific temper which takes into account only the present realities, no matter how discouraging, and the religious temper which dreams of the Kingdom of God and speaks of man as a child of God. If that tension is destroyed society faces the dreadful alternatives of a cynical realism

which enervates moral vigor or a sentimental and romantic religiosity which is out of touch with the facts. Modern science has revealed a world in which man is an infinitesimal organism existing upon a second rate planet of a second rate sun. He is neither as central to the life of the universe nor as unique a product of it as he imagined. It was inevitable that the destruction of ancient cosmologies with which religious assurances were closely intertwined should have produced a reaction in the temper of the modern mind which discounts everything but spatial and concrete reality. Yet that does not bring us any nearer the truth. However unimportant man may be, judged by physical standards, he is right in insisting that the values of truth, beauty and goodness which develop in his life are as real as the mountains and the planets. Religion is, in a sense, the devotion of man to these values and the insistence that they are real. It is impossible to deal with the world of values without symbolizing them by symbols drawn from the concrete world. That is why poetry is necessary to religion and why religion is itself poetry.

Personality might be defined as that type of reality where the world of things and the world of values meet. From one perspective man is an animal maintaining a precarious existence in a none too sympathetic world. From another viewpoint man is both the creator and the tool of the harmonies of truth, beauty and goodness which arise out of the concrete world and subdue it. While it is not possible to weigh, gauge and analyze these harmonies as exactly as physical scientists measure physical forces it is also not possible to read them out of the universe. Since they represent qualities of reality which elude specific and exact concepts, they must be apprehended and defined through the poetic and imaginative rather than the purely rational faculties. As long as history produces personalities which are more (or at least feel themselves to be more) than mere collocations of geographic and climatic forces, as long as men feel in themselves the power and the urge to transcend creation and create themselves and to discover in the universe that purpose and order which relates it to the purpose and the will which guides their own life, so long will men be incurably religious and will discover and create in their religious moods what they could neither find nor make by science and intelligence alone. The poet is a more dangerous guide than the scientist. He makes mistakes more easily. But as long as he has a method for discovering reality which the scientist cannot find we may be sure that mankind will not dispense with the poet, whatever may be the perils of his leadership.

Of course, religion is not merely poetry. Poetry is some-

times satisfied with a world of fancy. Religion believes that it reaches ultimate reality on the basis of its moral and poetic insights. "Blessed are the pure in heart" said Jesus, "for they shall see God." What this means is simply that we can realize the moral and personal character of the universe, can discover the nature of God through moral and spiritual rather than through intellectual insight. Upon this assertion and this faith all vital religion rests. Vital religion can be satisfied with neither purely intellectual defenses of the idea of God nor with magical revelations of the nature of God. "The Jews require a sign and the Gentiles seek after wisdom," said the Apostle Paul and dismissed both these methods. He found God in the moral and spiritual experience of Jesus. That is where Christians still find God. Or rather it is through that experience that they find him. Pure philosophy can never get beyond the conception of an immanent God who is too completely identified with nature. Unreflective orthodoxy finds God in revelation but does not relate him to the insights and experience of the individual. A vital and moral religion makes all high living, in which prayer is united with moral striving, the constant source of religious revelation.

This does not mean that the moral experience or poetic insights of any one individual are sufficient to reveal God to him. The experience of any one individual is limited and the imaginative capacity is never fully developed. The individual therefore needs the support of the whole experience of the race. He must appropriate those revelations of ultimate truth which came to the best men of every age who saw God through their moral experience and their poetic intuitions. However, any religion which bases its certainty purely upon experiences of others will lose vitality in the end. Like Job, we need to know God not only "by the hearing of the ear" but by some personal revelation. This personal revelation, on the other hand needs the support of more perfect experience. That is why the Christian turns to the Scriptures and is strengthened and refreshed by the testimony of the prophets and above all by the revelation in and through the life of Jesus. But any generation which loses the capacity to find God through insights cultivated in moral experience and poetic imagination will have no more than a desperate or a devitalized religious faith. Thus Jesus breaks with the Pharisees by demanding a religion which is based not only upon the traditions of the past but upon direct moral and spiritual experience. He finds suggestions of God in the family experience. ("If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more, etc."). He intimates that no one can pray to God who is not in loving relationship wtih his fellowmen.

BROOK FARM, A PROJECT OF NEW ENGLAND TRANSCENDENTALISM

By Margaret Davis Haeussler

A Great Decade

The decade from 1830 to 1840 was one of the most eventful in the history of our country. It was a period of ferment and change in almost every phase of life. The United States passed through a great political, economic, educational, and social revolution.

Politics swirled about Andrew Jackson and his interpretation of democracy. The last discriminatory legislation against Roman Catholics, Jews, and Anti-Trinitarians was repealed, the finishing touches coming with Doerr's Rebellion in 1842.

The factory system with its tendencies toward dehumanization and exploitation of the workers had become so well established that labor organized and held its first labor union convention in 1834. The invention of the screw propellor in 1836, the mowing machine in 1831, the reaper in 1833, and the steel plow in 1837 transformed the system of river and ocean transportation and agriculture.

The Lancasterian monitorial system of education had become unsatisfactory, and the first national convention to discuss the needs of education was held in 1839. Partial state school systems had come into being. Sixty-seven new colleges and universities were founded in this decade. It was "the golden age of American literature," great works appearing from the pens of Irving, Holmes, Prescott, Longfellow, Poe, Whittier, Bancroft, Emerson, Cooper, Bryant, and others.

The number of cities had risen from thirteen in 1820 to forty-four in 1840. The rapid growth of population brought many new social problems. New York had one saloon for every eighty inhabitants in 1833, and one-eighth of the total population was composed of public paupers and criminals. To make matters worse, the slavery question was rapidly dividing the country after the first appearance of *The Liberator* in 1831. Humanitarianism and reform were advocated by those who felt a real concern about the future.

Beginnings

Among those who thought deeply and seriously along this line was the group which conducted a project in agriculture and education at Brook Farm in Massachusetts. It was to be a miniature society in which there would be no conflict between economic and human values. John Dewey's much-talked-of project method

in education was thus antedated in America by about one hundred years.

Unfortunately we have few original documents and records regarding the movement. A copy of the constitution of the organization, volumes of letters, memoirs and casual references in the works of writers who lived or visited there, or had heard of the place, furnish most of the information on the subject.

The Transcendental Club

The Brook Farmers were motivated by the philosophy of Transcendentalism, not the system of Duns Scotus, but that of Kant in a modified form. The German philosopher declared that there was an imperative class of ideas which transcend experience, but are the means by which experience is to be tested. The Transcendental Club was organized in 1836 to study social and religious topics and such works as *The Critique of Pure Reason,* most of them emanating from Germany, the home of Transcendentalism. The German system underwent some modification in New England, however. The New England School never reduced it to a formal system of thought, but employed a rather mystical patois, exalted the spiritual over the material, and the inalienable worth of man. It represented largely the thought of Emerson and the scholarship of Hedge.

George Ripley

The guiding spirit of the Brook Farm venture was a Unitarian minister, the Rev. George Ripley. He could see no real difference between Unitarianism and Congregationalism in regard to their attitude toward social progress. Transcendentalism really represented a reaction against the essential Puritanism of both churches. They talked much of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, but did nothing, he felt, to objectify this idea.

Ripley was graduated from Harvard College in 1823, and from the Harvard Divinity School three years later. From 1826 to 1828 he served a Unitarian church in Boston, where he became a member of the Transcendental Club, and an associate editor of *The Dial,* the organ of this group.

Site Found and Acquired

While spending a summer vacation with his wife on a milk farm near West Roxbury, nine miles west of Boston, it occurred to both that this would be an ideal place for forming a community to be governed by their ideas of social and economic justice and good will. It was their wish "to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine

the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; to do away with the necessity of menial services by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more wholesome and simple life than can be lead amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions." Ripley wrote to Emerson on Nov. 9, 1840: "To accomplish these objects, we propose to take a small tract of land which, under skillful husbandry, uniting the garden and the farm, will be adequate to the subsistence of the families; and to connect with this a school or college, in which the most complete instruction shall be given, from the first rudiments to the highest culture."

In the same year Ripley purchased the site. It embraced 192 acres of land of varied contour near a pinewoods and the Charles River. In April, 1841, the Ripleys and about fifteen others, including Hawthorne, moved on the place. The formal organization of the "Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education" took place on the twenty-ninth of September of the same year.

The Preamble on the Purpose

The preamble of the "Articles of Agreement and Association between the members of the Institute for Agriculture and Education" set forth clearly the purpose of the organization: "In order more effectually to promote the great purpose of human culture; to establish the external relations of life on a basis of wisdom and purity; to apply the principles of justice and love to our social organization in accordance with the laws of divine providence; to substitute a system of brotherly cooperation for one of selfish competition; to secure to our children, and to those who may be entrusted to our care, the benefits of the highest physical, intellectual and moral education in the present state of human knowledge, the resources at our command will permit; to institute an attractive, efficient, and productive system of industry; to prevent the exercise of worldly anxiety by the competent supply of our necessary wants; to diminish the desire of excessive accumulation by making the acquisition of individual property subservient to upright and disinterested uses; to guarantee to each other the means of physical support and of spiritual progress and thus to impart a greater freedom, truthfulness, refinement and moral dignity to our mode of life, we the undersigned, do unite in a Voluntary Association."

Membership

The organization became an unincorporated jointstock company, a member being a person who owned at least one share of stock. No one was to be barred from membership because of religious beliefs. A member could be held accountable only for acts which violated the rights of other members. The freedom of individual opinion was to be untrammeled. Members were to be provided with employment adapted to their capacities, habits, and tastes, and to be paid for all labor in accordance with a fixed and equal scale, not to exceed one dollar per day. Ten hours of labor was the absolute limit for one day. Members and their families were to receive house-rent, fuel, food, and clothing at cost. Medical and educational facilities and the use of library and baths were free of charge. Those who could not work because of illness were not to be charged for anything for the period of their incapacitation. Children under ten and members over seventy years of age were not to be charged for food, "unless at the special request of the individual by whom the charge were paid, or unless the credits in his favor exceeded or equalled the amount of such charges." Children in school were not to work more than two hours a day and were to be paid for all labor, the wage not to exceed fifty cents a day. Those who completed the courses of instruction in the Farm schools were to receive a certificate of stock upon attaining the age of twenty and to become members of the organization. Five percent interest was to be paid on every share of stock. The next profits were to be "divided into a number of shares corresponding with the number of days' labor."

The administrative work was assigned to twelve directors who served in four departments: General Direction, Direction of Agriculture, Direction of Education, and Direction of Finance, three directors serving in each department.

The following twelve persons signed the constitution: George Ripley, Minot Pratt, D. Mack, Marianne Ripley, Warren Burton, Samuel D. Robbins, George C. Leach, Lemuel Capen, Sophia W. Ripley, Maria J. Pratt, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Mary Robbins. Mr. Mack and Mr. and Mrs. Robbins did not enter on the work. The number of members fluctuated from 15 to 120.

Income

The sources of income were threefold: agriculture and industries, the schools, and new members who invested in the project. The farming enterprise ended almost every year with a deficit, in spite of the fact that the yield per acre was greater than elsewhere in that section of the country. The ten-hour day was too short for

the harvest season. The implements were not of the best type and they didn't even buy a horse-rake until the third year.

After two years, with the influx of a varied group of tradesmen, industries received considerable attention. A tree-nursery was laid out, carpenters, printers, and shoemakers plied their trade, and Britannia ware was manufactured, but it was hard to find a ready market for many of these products. The printers spent most of their time on the Association's publication, *The Harbinger*. The sash and blind business was disastrous, for there was not enough capital on hand. The members of the various groups, such as the plowing group, weeding group, planting group, nursery group, milking group, washing group, kitchen group, etc., had the right to drop their work whenever they tired of it, and to *do* whatever they felt would be more congenial. Such individualism often played havoc with efficiency and impaired the general program.

The Schools

The schools drew many pupils whose parents were in sympathy with the movement, but who were not Associationists. There was an infant school for children under six, a primary school for those under ten, and a preparatory school for those over ten. The faculty was composed of Geo. Ripley, philosophy and mathematics; Geo. Bradford, literature; John Dwight, German and Greek; John Brown, theoretical and practical agriculture. The college preparatory course lasted six years, the agricultural course three years. To two of the outstanding students, Geo. and Burrill Curtis, we owe much of our information concerning the place.

Practical Idealists

Usually such a group of so-called idealists are looked upon as dreamers, incapable of any material good or activity. According to all reports, however, Brook Farm was always a very busy place. One of the first buildings bore the name, "The Hive," because of its busy-bee appearance. One of their main objectives was to work together as well as think together, and thus elevate domestic service to noble conditions. The usual household duties were performed by young women, but proposals over the kitchen sink, assistance by students i nthe laundry, and innocent flirtations over their flying needles made household work more play, glorifying the most menial tasks. Water for the colonists was supplied from a central pump. A duly appointed carrier kept the water jugs in the various buildings well-filled. Visitors were invariably amused at the enthusiasm displayed by highly cultured women scrubbing floors or scraping plates, and by gentlemen cleaning out stables or hoeing potatoes

The most surprising thing about it all was the air of happiness and cheerfulness that reigned throughout.

Their habits were simple and unusually sensible. Up at six and to bed at nine was the rule, broken only on possibly two or three gala occasions during the year. Temperance in eating and drinking was a matter of principle, an idea which was carried so far by some, that they demanded a strict vebetarian diet. As to tobacco, it was generally frowned upon, and it was never in vogue. Life had few complexities indeed. They even found curtains and carpets so unnecessary that they were permitted in only one or two of the best rooms. Even their dress was very simple. Women wore short skirts and knickerbockers for work (now we know they were ahead of their day!). Their flowing hair and broad hats do not impress us as being quite so modern. Men wore comfortable blue or tan tunics instead of their "old world coats." Even they seemed to favor long hair, unshorn faces, and beards.

Social Life

After making so much play out of their work, outsiders often wondered if they had any "real" amusements. The fact was that enjoyment was a daily habit. In the summer there was walking, picnicking, and boating, while the winter brought with it such sports as skating and coasting. Outdoor sports such as these were a passion with the Brook Farmers, but there was never, so far a we know, a gun or a fish-hook on the grounds. Of course it would have been contrary to their philosophy to take life. In addition to these outdoor amusements, indoor entertainment was abundant. Dancing was in vogue, and it was no uncommon sight to see the tables hurriedly cleared after the evening meal, the floor bared, and the music begun, so that a great many rounds might be danced before they retired. After a more tiresome day's work, punning might be a chief diversion, or possibly impromptu discussions in the "Hive" parlor. Besides these, there were literary societies and reading clubs, tableaux, dialogs, and plays. One member put a portable stage at their disposal for such occasions. There was very little card playing. Music found better favor, and there was always plenty of it. Once in a great while, a little group would attend a concert at Boston and afterward walk home under the starry sky. Such exploits were infrequent, however, owing to the rare talents and skill of the members themselves.

Church Attendance

Since enjoyment was so general and habitual, many have wondered if church going played any part at Brook Farm. There was always a party that went on Sundays to Theodore Parker's church.

He not only visited the Farm, but drew people from all walks of life to his magnetic self through his tender sympathy and unaffected ways. Henry Channing conducted religious services at times at the grove on the Farm, and some attendants proceeded to organize a church. However, this was in opposition to the theories of most Brook Farmers, for there could be no unified church among people who ranged all the way from Freethinkers to Catholics.

Literary Folk Interested

Brook Farm was a Mecca for literary people of the day. Besides Geo. Ripley, the founder, only Hawthorne and Dwight of the Transcendental Club joined the Association. Hawthorne was very enthusiastic over the project at first, for he thought that it would afford him increased opportunity for the solitude he so loved. On the contrary, he found the buzz of life there extremely distracting, and he left after one year. Many critics say that that one year proved a setback to the unfolding of his genius. Alcott gave many of the lectures at the community, and although he always remained in sympathy with its main ideas, he never joined. Emerson visited the Farm but never became actively identified with it. Swift said that Emerson "never refers to Brook Farm without conveying to the finest sense the assurance that some one is laughing behind the shrubbery." The idea that Margaret Fuller was one of the Brook Farmers is also erroneous. It is true that she passed many hours there as a guest, and that she was in sympathy with their program, but she never became a member.

A Disastrous Fire

Although founded by prominent people, and supported by scholars and famous writers, Brook Farm was doomed to failure—at least as far as appearances were concerned. Lack of finance rather than lack of ability brought it on the rocks. The Phalanstery, the central building, which contained an auditorium, administrative offices, and suites of rooms for members, burned to the ground as it neared completion. Since the Association was heavily encumbered with mortgages, this fire proved to be a disaster of such proportions that recovery was impossible. Nevertheless the members continued to carry on almost one more year.

Community Not Overemancipated

What reputation did the community gain for itself? Although it accepted some of Fourier's principles, it rejected the Frenchman's ideas regarding marriage. The fact is that the Associationists were never charged with promiscuity or immorality. A more recent Transcendentalist pays them this tribute: "That a mere

aggregation of persons without written compact, formal understanding, or unity of purpose should have lived together for nearly five years without scandal or reproach; should have separated without rancor or bitterness, and left only fragrant memory behind them—is a tribute to the Transcendental faith." They were radicals, but not Bohemians.

Was It Worth While?

Conservative Boston considered it a Utopian folly. The judgment of a later age is more charitable and just. It is recognized today that these Brook Farmers did make a real contribution to the life of the nation. We realize more than ever that charity is too often a mere palliative, accomplishing no genuine reform, and that what is needed is justice. They believed in the amplitudes of the larger life, a life which begins in this world, transforming the individual and group relationships of men into a Kingdom of God

The Associationists held that Brook Farm did not fail. Their ideas, they insisted, would go marching on, and some day be a reality. Did not Jesus say: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but *if it die,* it beareth much fruit" . . ?

NEGLECTED IMPERATIVES IN THE PREACHING OF SALVATION TODAY

H. J. Schick, S.T.D.

In our preaching about salvation we should be guided by the interpretation Jesus placed on salvation. We should ask ourselves the question: "What did Jesus as a Saviour do? From what did He save men?" Turning to the record of His life as we have it in the Gospels, we note that the saving work of Jesus was to proclaim the "good news"; to heal the afflicted of diseases; to save the outcast from despair through His friendliness and sympathy; to be religious in an honest way, not in the artificial way of soul-deadening formalism; to be humble and not self-righteous; to be spiritually-minded, instead of worldly-minded; to be trustful in God's super-abounding love and care, instead of being filled with anxious solicitude for the physical necessities of life to the exclusion of higher things. Jesus, then, sought to save men from external forces which prevented men from realizing the true life in God; and He sought further to save men from inner desires, ambitions and passions which hinder men from hearing the Gospel and accepting its truths.

Guided by this action of the Saviour, we should ask: "From what do men need to be saved *today?*" Are there certain *external forces* which prevent men from realizing the higher life in God? What about the *social environment* of the individual? Is there over-crowding? Is there under-nourishment? Is there lack of proper education? Or are there vicious dance-halls, "blind pigs," flagrant or clandestine immoral resorts, uncensored movies that are exerting their pernicious influence on the community? We should seek to realize that much of the low moral standards and the moral delinquency are due to just such evils and we should seek to reconstruct the social environment of the individual accordingly.

We should ask further: What are the *industrial conditions* of our community? Are they such that employers and employees are thwarted in the unfolding of their spiritual life? Are men tempted to be dishonest just because the industrial conditions make it exceedingly difficult to be otherwise? Is a spirit of graft and greed engendered? Is money the sole motive? How can sin be taken out of *business?* Rather than try to trace our ills to Adam, we should try to recognize the evil in the conditions round about us and seek their abolishment.

Again, we should ask: Are there *physical defects,* poor eyesight, adenoids, diseased tonsils, or other physical ills which exclude the normal development of one's life? We should seek to re-

alize that every being has a right to be well-born, to live a normal and happy life, to give life its fullest expression. No child should suffer for the sins of its parents. It has the right to come into the world and to live in the world with all its physical, spiritual and mental faculties sound and capable of coping successfully with life's problems. Hasn't the preacher something to say about the home? Isn't it his duty to combat the frightful ignorance as to the bearing and rearing of children?—

Along with these external forces which are hindering men from realizing the true life in God, there are *internal forces* which are in no less measure than the external forces preventing men from living the Christ-like life.

We should strive to realize that men need to be saved from *mental perplexity and despair.* Hosts of men today have outgrown the concept of the cosmos as depicted in the Bible. Theirs is the complex world of modern scientific thought. The traditional doctrine of theology no longer meets their needs. Rather than be dishonest and force their larger life into the narrow concepts of a medieval view of theology, they are led by a fine sense of honor to stay away from the church. But with the discarding of the traditional concepts of religion they are suffering at times spiritual agonies. They feel lonely and forsaken. How save them? Not by condemning them as doubters, but by realizing that life and God are greater than any doctrine, or traditional system of religion. We should seek to interpret religion in terms of modern life, and to find such ideas which might express the honest convictions of the modern-world-man and lift him into the consciousness and joy of vital communion with God.

We should further seek to realize that men need to be saved from *the over-mastering power of the strong primal urges in man.* There are strong emotional tendencies in all of us, such as fear, anger, hunger, sex impulses, love of power, love of ease. How shall they be dealt with? Shall the ascetic method of crushing or suppressing these instincts be adopted? No, for a suppressed emotion may become a festering sore in the psychic organism of man, leading to all kinds of nervous disorders. Rather than the method of suppression let the method be adopted that will lead to the transmutation or sublimation of these instincts. And to accomplish this we should seek to make use of the findings of psychology and sociology to guide us in the proper use of remedial measures.

We should above all seek to realize that salvation must include a growing appreciation of the *life of Jesus.* In Him God found fullest expression. In His life we discover uplifting, transfiguring

power. Men today are not looking for a cure of cosmic ills in terms of Messianism. Perfection is not attained by catastrophic methods. Rather are men loking for a spiritual force which will lift the human race to higher planes of living. This religious dynamic is the life of Jesus. To relate that life to our modern life; to see in that life the up-lifting power of God-consciousness; to view in the Christ the life that God would have us live; to walk in His steps of ministering love; to save others as the Christ sought to save men, this should be at the heart of every message from the pulpit today.

In our preaching of salvation, we should try to stress *the larger life in God through Jesus.* Questions concerning the miraculous element in the Bible, the natures and the wills of Christ, the fall of Adam, the corruptive power of original sin, sacramentalism and Messianism, need not play a prominent part in one's preaching or pastoral activity. We should shift the emphasis to the wonderful opportunities of a Christ-like life; to the greatness of the love of an all-environing God; to the joy and privilege of co-operating with Him for the betterment of the world.

In our preaching of salvation, therefore, we should try to think of sin more concretely and refer it less to Adam and more to its sociological and psychological causes. We should seek to interpret salvation not so much in the terms of the Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds, but rather in terms of God-consciousness and its relation to human affairs. We should not seek to stress sacramentalism and supernaturalism, but rather to express the significance of the work and teaching of Jesus for our day and age, and seek to win man to co-operate with a loving, all-environing God for the development of the human race from glory to glory.

LUTHER'S LEGACY AND NEW METHODS OF HANDING IT ON

"Gottes Wort und Luther's Lehr
Vergehen nie und nimmermehr."

By Gerhard A. Friz

The man in the pulpit thus ended his sermon with a dramatic flourish. The audience seemed to be impressed, and rightly so, for the speaker appealed to their pride and had portrayed for them the glories of the sacred heritage handed down to them. The speaker emphasized the sacredness of this heritage, the extreme importance of this book that had been placed parallel in its permanence with God's Word, and the holiness of this religious manual, the Catechism. It was indeed a fitting tribute to a book that survived in its form and method as the guidebook for religious instruction for over four centuries.

Strangely, I was not moved into the same ecstatic mood for I was somewhat troubled in mind and a little pained by the sermon. An inheritance should always be a sacred thing, but it should not be idolized. It should not be accepted as a talent that is to be buried in the ground, but as a talent that is to be used and increased. When Luther bequeathed the Catechism as a rich legacy unto his issue, he hardly expected them to worship it and to preserve it unchanged and unaltered. During the sermon I was thinking of my own Confirmation classes, of my own and other's experiences when we were confirmed, and quite naturally of the annual ordeal before Palm Sunday. Somehow, I could not feel satisfied with the glorious fact that the method of instruction and the manner of presentation of this primer in theology had been preserved unchanged for over four hundred years. For four centuries it has been: question, answer, proof-text. Other educational methods have changed from generation to generation. New and better methods supplanted the old ones. And with the application of new methods, the substance of teaching was not changed. Luther's Legacy, however, has remained the one and only method, the only infallible guide by which his heirs are initiated into the church.

It is maintained that the results have always been satisfactory. They have been, if one considers uniformity in expression of a faith. There has been little variance of opinion, the result of a uniform "book-faith" that was memorized; there has been little secession from the mother-church, the result of exacting a pledge of loyalty from thei nitiate; there has been little heresy and dissension, the result of fear of expulsion and the teaching of finality in the faith

memorized. However, when one observes the religious mind during and after confirmation one suspects that very little of the memorized faith is actually assimilated and applied in everyday life. There is perhaps much knowledge, but little understanding, leaving room for much confusion, fear, and superstition. The apparent firm foundations that were laid during the period of confirmation instruction, were often but a religious mirage that never became actual or real. We base our conclusions upon observations and inquiries made mostly in rural sections. These were made in part incognito, that is, the writer was not recognized as a clergyman, and thus was able to elicit a more frank opinion from the person observed or questioned.

The weakness and the inefficiency of such an educational method are apparent as one observes the religious mind during the period of confirmation instruction. Anxious parents wishing to hurry their children through the necessary preliminaries for church membership consider not the age, nor the ability of the child. The only thing that concerns them is to get this matter over with, that the child might enter unencumbered upon its high school career or engage in other work. Parents are, of course, concerned about the diligence of their children and urge them to do good memorization work; perhaps strengthening their admonitions by alluding to that ordeal of public examination. Their is a certain pride expressed in the words: "I never missed a question when I was confirmed." It characterizes the religious mind of the parent in that it unwittingly indicates the attitude of the importance of much knowledge without much understanding.

The instructor often proceeds with the same attitude. There is the incessant drilling of questions and answers; there is the constant reminder of that final ordeal that urges the children to be letter perfect. There are explanations, but they are usually of the proof-text type and often filled with a difficult terminology. This perhaps elaborates the definition but adds little to clarify the idea. The bulk of instruction consists of a hundred or more questions and answers. These take the place of the concepts and processes; they are the dictionary of the religious mind of the confirmed. This, naturally, produces uniformity in belief, perhaps a desired result, but it fails to establish one's faith or to anchor the same.

It is highly improbable that the mind of the pupil absorbs a large amount of knowledge during a season of instruction. One cannot hope to implant many ideas within several months or even a year. That is one reason why so much of the taught material slips off into the memory and so little takes root in the soul. The mem-

ory might retain it, maybe unto death, and one can quote freely an expression of faih; but that faith usually remains one of expression and seldom becomes one of experience. Witness the answers you receive if you question a member of your church who was confirmed many years ago. He will answer your question precisely in the same manner as he did on examination day. It is still a vague definition and far from an assimilated concept acquired by a spiritual experience.

Observe also the state of mind of the pupils at the time of the ordeal of public examination. There is a high nervous tension. They are not going to give a testimony of *their* faith but a recital of what they have learned. All the mental powers are strained to be letter perfect. It is all so much like a spelling match; one unravels the thread of memorization. One can hardly call that a testimony of faith. The rite of confirmation which follows the next Sunday or immediately is relatively unimportant after such a preliminary—, at least in the mind of the child.

II

Knowing what the initiate memorized let us trace the progress of the religious mind after confirmation. What becomes of the impressions received: are they assimilated and incorporated and understood in actual life? For many there is no progress at all. Confirmation seems to have closed the mind to any further serious religious thinking; unless one is by some circumstance awakened to the weakness of this preparatory training and realizes the necessity of some personal thinking to steer out of the religious confusion that clutters the mind. In this effort many go off on tangents and curious and peculiar conceptions arise. One can almost trace the process of the mind as it develops these misconceptions and one can conclude that it was the lack of a definite concept in the beginning that permitted such ideas to germinate and to grow.

Consider a few of these. What is the natural state of man? The pupil memorizes: Since the fall man is corrupt, therefore *unfit for anything good*, but *prepared for* and *inclined to evil*. This *inherited corruption* is called *original sin*. And the proof-text: *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*. There may have been explanations that try to mitigate the conclusion Luther enunciated in this formulation; but the memorized portion remains as a basis upon which the mind will later build. Since the underlying idea seldom becomes clear to the pupil, he is inclined to have false conceptions of the same which grow into absurd and grotesque ideas that govern his actions. Let us consider a case.

A man comes to me and with tears in his eyes confides in me that he is cursed by God. He is inclined to be irrepressive in his

actions. His motives are always toward the evil. He is haunted by the feeling that he has inherited such a great portion of this original sin, for which, of course, he is not responsible since it was the fault of Adam and Eve; hence it must be a curse of God upon him. But why? I should answer that. I ask him first of all where he got that idea. His answer is—'So my pastor taught me when I was confirmed and does not the catechism teach the same.' From the vague idea of original sin has emerged the concept of the curse of God! The process is perfectly logical. He has inherited so many inclinations to sin, he was born in sin, God cursed him with such a human make-up. It was indeed difficult to tear down these old foundations and almost hopeless to erect new ones in their stead.

Another case that was observed had a somewhat different trend. Here the idea of original sin grew into a complex of helplessness, of inability to fight against sin. This person placed all his human desires toward evil under the category of original sin. Since they were inherited, he made little effort to master them himself, rather, letting them come to expression, believing that the sins thus committed would be readily forgiven by the grace of God operative through the Lord's Supper. It was thus that he never had any scruples of conscience after committing certain sins, explaining the incongruity of his actions and claiming his innocence by designing those actions as "natural," as inherited, as original sin. A little bit of the idea expressed in the words: "You are the master of your fate, you are the Captain of your soul," injected into the teaching of this concept would have prevented the growth of such an idea. And a little less letter perfection and more understanding would have been profitable in this case.

One could continue and mention numerous cases where this confusion of ideas exist. Ideas of salvation without the least personal effort, ideas of heaven and hell as definite physical localities, ideas of death as the punishment for sin taken in a crude literal sense, ideas of the will of God that led to fatalism. One wonders where the source of these ideas might be. It is true that they do not always originate directly from the vague explanations and instructions received during confirmation, nor is their source always in the memorized religious manual; but generally one is able to trace their source as originating then and there. All of which leads us to conclude that the legacy of the Reformer has not always been regarded and used in the proper manner.

III

He who ventures to suggest new methods and procedure of bequeathing this legacy of Luther's must realize that he is trespassing on sacred ground. One is in danger of desecrating the holy

and one meets forces that seek to hold the old established methods inviolate. Four hundred years of the same manner of bequeathing and the same method of instruction are perhaps sufficient to prove the value of the legacy, but do not necessarily indicate that the method was and is the best and most feasible; nor that the method cannot be changed to advantage.

Pedagogical methods have changed from generation to generation. Our children learn by a different method than we did. No longer does the child begin with the A. B. C.'s, but with a definite concept. It learns to recognize the word "dog" and "cat" before it knows the alphabet. It learns more quickly that way and the impressions are lasting.

It is an interesting experiment to try the concept method in teaching religion. For example: instead of letting the child memorize the answer to the question—"What do the Holy Scriptures teach about God," trace the concept of God from the early O. T. days until the revelation of Jesus. Acquaint the pupil with the various ideas of God that are held today, show the inconsistencies of some of these ideas, finally reason to some conclusion. Let the conclusion be the starting concept upon which the child can later elaborate. Then let the child express its conception of God in a written test. If the concept is clear and in the child's own words and vocabulary, you can feel assured that the impression will be lasting. If the concept is not clear, clarify the concept by further instruction, always insisting that the child reason with you. In all this there is no memorization, but cooperative thinking between the pupil and teacher.

I have before me several papers that were written during one of these tests. The results are gratifying. They indicate a fuller comprehension of God than any method of question and answer could bring about. The naive, yet genuine expressions are for me an indication that the child actually assimilated the concept, and will retain it better than if it would have memorized a definition. The same procedure can be followed in practically all the concepts of religion.

There may be some objection that concepts vary. That is true. No two persons have exactly the same idea of God, even if they memorize the definition in standardized form. The same is true in the Scriptural idea of God; it varies with almost every book in the Bible. And yet one finds a certain consistency running all the way through and finally it attains definite stability in the teaching of Jesus. It is in this that we retain uniformity in teaching and maintain uniformity in concepts.

The concept method of teaching religion almost necessarily eliminates the ordeal of public examination, and happily so. Instead of the public performance giving evidence of the knowledge accumulated, there are the silent testimonies upon paper that were wirtten in the last class session, where the youthful mind could function without the fear of missing a question and without the accompanying embarrassment of parent and child. The rite of confirmation will then take on added significance in that it is the high point, the climax of the experiences and adventures of faith of the course of instruction instead of the sequence of the important ordeal of the previous work.

Those of us who are laying foundations of faith in the souls of youth have a great responsibility, and I would certainly hesitate to take particular pride in having met this responsibility by merely passing on this legacy of Luther's as did the fathers hundreds of years ago. One cannot hope for a vital religion among rural folk, nor anywhere else, if one is satisfied to have the children perform annually the act of accepting this legacy by giving public rendition of a memorized manual. The attack of the "Anti-confirmationists" is partly justified in this respect, but with the application of a different method and the elimination of the public examination much of their argument is refuted. Confirmation should be the beginning of the adventure of faith. The youthful mind can now go forth on spiritual adventures of its own, and how important it is that it take along more than a memorized book, which may be a good compass to guide, but which one must understand before one can use it.

Religionsgeschichte und Christentum.

Von Professor Dr. Grützmacher, Wiesbaden.

II.

Die Stellung des Christentums in der Religionsgeschichte.

Um die Stellung des Christentums in der Religionsgeschichte zutreffend zu bestimmen, bedarf es der Erinnerung an die hauptsächlichsten Ergebnisse, der bisherigen religionsphilosophischen Untersuchungen und ihrer Verwendung im Dienst der christlichen Apologetik. Die Erörterung über die — in ihrem allgemeinen Wesen als Verkehrsgemeinschaft zwischen Gott und Menschen erkannte Religion — zeigte, daß ihr höchster Wert und vollkommene Wahrheit zukam. Der Blick in die empirische Religionsgeschichte zeigte, daß die Religion immer nur in konkreter geschichtlicher Form existiert, aber zugleich auch, daß die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte nur mit Irrationellem und Wertlosem vermischte Religionstypen geschaffen hat, die von sich aus nicht steigend eine reine und absolute Religion zu entwickeln vermochten. Diesen Tatbeständen gegenüber ist eine doppelte Stellung möglich. Entweder man kann vollkommen skeptisch auf die Erfassung einer wahren Religion verzichten und mit Lessing sprechen, der echte Ring vermutlich ging verloren. Damit aber gibt man überhaupt die Wahrheit der Religion auf oder aber man begreift, daß eine Religion eine einzigartige Stellung einnehmen muß sowohl hinsichtlich ihrer Entstehung — aus andern Kräften, als denen in der allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte wirksamen — wie mit einem andern Ergebnis, nämlich der vollkommenen Entsprechendheit zwischen geschichtlicher Form und übergeschichtlichem Inhalt. **Soll eine wahre Religion entstehen, so muß sie auf übergeschichtlichem Weg die reine geschichtliche Form für das Wesen der Religion herstellen, in dem sie zugleich alles Irrationelle aus der Religionsgeschichte ausscheidet und das in ihr vorhandene Wahre und Wertvolle übernimmt.**

Diesen Anspruch aber erhebt und befriedigt das Christentum. Das Christentum will nicht nur eine unter den übrigen Religionen sein, aber auch nicht nur wie die idealistische Religionsphilosophie, zuletzt besonders Tröltsch, behauptet hat — die höchste unter den bisherigen Religionen.

Es stellt sich vielmehr als **die absolute Religion** allen andern Religionen scharf gegenüber, weil es den Anspruch erhebt durch besondre Offenbarung, **den** Weg, **die** Wahrheit, **das** Leben erschlossen zu haben. Der Christ erlebt seine Religion, als eine einzigartige und vollendete Erschließung des Göttlichen, die weder in Vergangenheit ihres Gleichen hat, noch in der Zukunft von einer

andern Religion überboten werden kann. Das Christentum will die absolute Religion sein. Gegen diesen Absolutheitsanspruch des Christentums machen sich aber **Bedenken** geltend, **die es zunächst zu prüfen gilt, um jenen dann mit positiven Argumenten zu unterstützen.**

Man hat behauptet, der Absolutheitsanspruch des Christentums würde schon dadurch hinfällig, daß ihn die andern Religionen in gleicher Weise geltend machen. Bei einer ganzen Reihe von Religionen ist das aber tatsächlich überhaupt nicht der Fall. Die von uns als Naturreligionen, wie als polytheistische zusammengefaßten beiden ersten Religionstypen haben nie beansprucht, die einzig wahren für alle Welt und Zukunft zu sein. Vielmehr sind sie theoretisch anspruchslos und praktisch tolerant. Sie sind zufrieden, wenn sie im Raum ihres eigenen Stammes und Volkes Geltung haben und leugnen nicht, daß jenseits ihrer Landesgrenzen andre Götter herrschen und die ihrigen machtlos wären. Infolgedessen haben diese Religionen auch niemals Mission getrieben und wenn ihr Volk in ein andres Land siegend eindrang, ließen sie dem fremden Volk seine eigene Religion. So hat — und doch nicht nur aus politischen Motiven — Alexander der Große und selbst Rom gehandelt. **So scheidet mithin der ganze Kreis der natur- und polytheistischen Religionen aus, wenn es sich um die Stelle der absoluten Religion handelt.**

Einige wenige Religionen, die sich auf der Uebergangsstufe zum Monotheismus befanden, wie die mit der alten Zarathustrareligion zusammenhängende Mithrasreligion und der Manichäismus haben zwar in den ersten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderten den Versuch gemacht Weltreligion zu werden, und zwar praktisch in noch stärkerem Maß als theoretisch. Man hat festgestellt, daß in dem dritten nachchristlichen Jahrhundert die Zahl der Mithrasverehrer mindestens den Christen gleichkam und die Mithrasreligion weit über ihr östliches Ursprungsland fast in allen Teilen des römischen Weltreiches bis nach Germanien viele Anhänger gewonnen hatte. Allein diese Religionen ebenso wie der Manichäismus, wird — wenn auch nicht ohne harten Kampf — faktisch und auch geistig vom Christentum überwunden, so daß sie neben diesem nicht mehr um die Palme der Weltreligion ringen können. — Eine zeitlang hat das Judentum, sowohl seiner Ueberzeugung wie seinem Handeln nach, Weltreligion werden wollen. Jahwe sollte der einzig wahre Gott sein und alle Völker zu ihm auf den Berg Zion pilgern. Darum übte das Judentum Mission und gewann auch unter den Völkern nicht wenig Anhänger. Als aber das Christentum aufkam und sich verbreitete, verlor das Judentum in dem Maß an werbender Kraft, daß es selbst seine Weltmission aufgab. So

ist es bis auf den heutigen Tag geblieben, **so daß auch das Judentum die Konkurrenz in dem Kampf um die absolute Stellung in der Religionsgeschichte aufgegeben hat.** Es bleiben infolgedessen nur noch zwei Religionen über, die neben dem Christentum in Betracht kommen, der Buddhismus und Mohammedanismus. Soweit der erstere allerdings in seiner weitaus größten Verbreitung zu einer Natur- und polytheistischen Religion geworden ist wie in Tibet, China, Japan, denkt auch er nicht daran, sich theoretisch auf Alleingeltung, praktisch auf Mission einzustellen. Nur in seiner ältesten Form, in der Gestalt Buddhas tritt er neben, ja über Christus Darum bedarf es mit ihr einer eingehenderen Auseinandersetzung, die in einem besondern Artikel über Buddhismus und Christentum folgen wird. In noch stärkerem Maß ist der Islam Konkurrent des Christentums, so daß auch hier eine besondre Abhandlung zur Auseinandersetzung notwendig wird. Nehmen wir ihre Grundresultate voraus, so ergibt sich als Abschluß dieses Gedankenkreises: **Das Christentum hat in der Religionsgeschichte keine Religion neben sich, die den gleichen Absolutheitsanspruch erhebt oder beweist.**

Gegen die Sonderstellung des Christentums in der Religionsgeschichte stellt sich als zweiter bedeutsamer Einwand die Behauptung ein, es habe mit andern Religionen so viele Gemeinsamkeiten in Lehre, Kultus und Leben, daß es auf eine Sonderstellung keinen Anspruch erheben könne. **Religionsgeschichtliche Analogien sollen dem Christentum seine Sonderart nehmen.** In der Tat haben in den letzten Jahrzehnten eine ganze Anzahl außertheologischer Forscher wie Theologen eine Fülle von Analogien zusammengetragen. Im Alten Testamente ließ man Schöpfungslehre, Sündenfall, Messias und Jenseitshoffnungen aus andern orientalischen Religionen entnommen sein. Im NeuenTestament behauptete man, daß besonders Geburt und Auferstehung Jesus von andersher stammten und ließ erst recht die ganze Trinitätslehre und Christologie ein griechisches Gebilde sein. Alle diese Behauptungen bedürfen der gründlichen Nachprüfung, die in zahlreichen Fällen die absolute Unrichtigkeit der genannten Beobachtungen ergeben und bestenfalls den Tatbestand ganz nebensächlicher, rein formaler Analogien festgestellt hat. Unsre Auseinandersetzung mit dem Buddhismus wird das an einigen Beispielen konkret zeigen. Dennoch muß **eine wahrhaftige Apologetik den Tatbestand einiger bedeutsamer Analogien anerkennen,** wie eine auch außerhalb des Christentums bestehende Erlösererwartung, wie die Annahme, daß dieser Erlöser wunderbar geboren und ewig fortleben wird. Auch sakramentale Handlungen kommen außerhalb des Christentums vor. Es fehlt auch nicht an Berührungen in den ethischen und eschatologischen Vorstellungen.

Wie sind diese Analogien religionsphilosophisch zu erklären und

apologetisch zu bewerten? Gerade die bedeutsamsten, wie etwa die Forderung der Feindesliebe beim Chinesen Laotse um 600 vor Christus und in der Bergpredigt Jesu stehen in keinerlei historischem Zusammenhang. Sie sind vielmehr unabhängig von einander entstanden zu denken, wie wir das bei andern bedeutsamen Erkenntnissen auch auf außerreligiösem Gebiet gar nicht so selten beobachten. In der Geschichte der Wissenschaft sind nicht selten hervorragende Erfindungen mehrfach unabhängig von einander erfolgt. Genau das Gleiche ist in der Religionsgeschichte der Fall und zwar auf Grund gleicher wiederkehrender religionspsychologischer Motive. Zeiten der Not rufen immer wieder die Hoffnung auf einen Erlöser wach, Ungerechtigkeit und Leid in der Welt den Gedanken an eine jenseitige Wirklichkeit. Die Geburt des Erlösers in ganz besondrer Weise, ebenso sein Kampf mit dem Bösen ist gleichfalls ein naheliegendes und wiederkehrendes Motiv. **Aus der identischen, allgemein menschlichen geistigen Anlage und Bedarf wie ähnlichen geschichtlichen Situationen entstehen in der Religionsgeschichte analoge Bildungen, die auch im Christentum wiederkehren.**

Diese wirklichen und echten Analogien sind aber nicht dazu geeignet, um den besonderen Wahrheitsanspruch des Christentums hinfällig zu machen, sondern sie zeigen nur, daß es auch **außerhalb des Christentums vereinzelte Wahrheitserkenntnisse** gibt, die der Christ auf Gottes auch in außerchristlichen Religionen, aus besonderen Gründen nicht fehlende Wirksamkeit zurückführt. Diese Erkenntnisse haben schon Männer ausgesprochen, die in schärfster theoretischer und praktischer Auseinandersetzung mit dem Heidentum standen. So erkennt Paulus Römer 2, 14 an, daß die Heiden — trotz aller Verdunkelung doch ein natürliches Vermögen bewahrten, Gutes und Rechtes zu erkennen und dementsprechend zu formulieren. Apostelgeschichte 14, 17 stellt Paulus fest, daß Gott sich in der ganzen Welt nicht unbezeugt gelassen habe und 17, 22 bezeugt er sogar den Athenern, daß sie Gott nicht ferngeblieben seien. Diese Gedanken haben die altchristlichn Apologeten bei ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit den vorchristlichen Religionen weitergeführt. Justin nimmt einen sogenannten „Logos spermatikos" an, d. h. eine Offenbarung des Logos durch vereinzelte Samenkörner in der allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte, während er im Christentum ganz und vollkommen erschienen ist. Tertullian redet von einer „Anima naturaliter christiana," die naturgemäß in der allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte einzelne christliche Wahrheiten aus sich herausgesetzt hat. Diese Gedankengänge in ihrem noch heute bleibenden positiven Wert hat der schwedische Erzbischof Söderblom in seiner Schrift: „Natürliche Theologie und allgemeine Religionsgeschichte

1913" dargelegt. Auch die mittelalterliche Kirche hat in einem Gesang angedeutet, daß der Messias gekommen sei: „teste David cum Sybilla," und damit festgestellt, daß nicht nur der alttestamentliche Sänger, sondern auch die heidnische Sängerin Wahrheit verkündet hat. Dementsprechend hat Michelangelo alttestamentliche Propheten und heidnische Seherinnen an der Decke der Sixtina vereinigt. Auch die alten protestantischen Dogmatiker erkennen an, daß bestimmte christliche Gedanken in einer natürlichen wie in einer übernatürlichen Offenbarung wurzeln. In der neueren Zeit ist besonders Schelling auch für eine positive Bedeutung der allgemeinen Mythologie eingetreten. **Diese allgemeine Offenbarung ist aber nur eine vereinzelte und intermittierende, nicht eine universale und abschließende.** Sie hat hier und da einzelne Wahrheiten aus sich heraus geschaffen, die aber in keinem Zusammenhang miteinander stehen, sondern immer wieder verdunkelt und zerrissen werden durch den früher erkannten Einbruch des Irrationellen in die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte.

Fragt man nach dem Zweck dieser merkwürdigen allgemeinen Offenbarung, so ist darauf zu antworten, daß sie den Sinn hatte, die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte nicht völlig im Irrationellen versinken zu lassen und die Fähigkeit eines Ueberganges für die Menschen zur christlichen Offenbarung zu erhalten. Hätte Gott die Religionen völlig ihre eigenen Wege gehen lassen, so wären in ihnen die abwärts führenden Kräfte, wie Magie und Mythos in dem Maß zum Sieger geworden, daß keinerlei Anknüpfungspunkte mehr für die christliche Verkündung übrig geblieben wären. Diese pflegt praktisch bei der Predigt nicht nur den heidnischen Irrtum zu verurteilen, sondern auch an vorhandene Wahrheiten anzuknüpfen. Die Samenkörner des Logos haben die Möglichkeit erhalten, an sie die vollendete Offenbarung des Christentums anzuschließen. Wäre nicht der Gedanke an die Gottheit lebendig geblieben, so vermöchte auch die Verkündigung eines Gottes keine Resonanz zu finden; gäbe es nicht Erlösererwartung, so würde auch Erlöser kommen ohne Echo bleiben. **So haben die wahren religionsgeschichtlichen Analogien zum Christentum die positive Bedeutung: für die christliche Wahrheit empfänglich zu halten; aus Zeugen gegen sie verwandeln sie sich in Herolde für sie.**

Lösen sich so die Gegenstände gegen den besondern Anspruch des Christentums, die absolute Religion zu sein, auf, so gibt es eine ganze Reihe **positiver Beobachtungen** die dafür sprechen. Ihre nur skizzenhafte Andeutung an dieser Stelle soll den Leser zu ihrer weiteren Ausführung und Verstärkung locken. Für das Christentum spricht die überaus erfolgreiche Geschichte seiner bisherigen Ausbreitung, besonders in seinen ersten Jahrhunderten. Hier stau-

den ihm — worauf schon hingedeutet wurde — mächtige und ebenbürtige Konkurrenten in Heidentum und Judentum gegenüber. Es hat sie all überwunden. Auch im Mittelalter setzte sich noch die Ausbreitung der christlichen Religion fort — wenn auch leider nicht immer mit rein religiösen Mitteln. Nach Jahrhunderten des Stillstandes ist zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts wieder eine bewußte, mit rein religiösen Mitteln arbeitende Mission für die Absolutheit des Christentums aufgetreten — mit nicht geringen Erfolgen, wenn auch erst die Zukunft noch größere gegen den stärksten Konkurrenten des Christentums, den Islam, bringen wird. **Die Ausbreitungsgeschichte des Christentums bringt mithin einen bedeutsamen Beweis für die Berechtigung des christlichen Absolutheitsanspruchs.** — Für ihn spricht weiter die **Regenerations- und die Beweglichkeitsfähigkeit des Christentums.** Wie andre Religionen hat auch das Christentum im Lauf seiner langen Geschichte manche Verderbungen erfahren und Elemente aus den Natur- und polytheistischen Religionen aufgenommen. Aber es hat sich besonders in der Reformation aus seinen Wurzeln heraus erneuert und ist wieder zu einer geistigen Erlösungsreligion geworden. Das haben Mohammedanismus und Buddhismus gegenüber noch tiefergehenden Verderbungen bisher nicht vermocht.

Hinsichtlich des Verhältnisses zur Kultur zeigt das Christentum die doppelte Fähigkeit, sich mit den verschiedensten Kulturen zu verbinden, aber sich doch auch in dem Maß ihnen gegenüber selbständig zu bewahren, daß der Untergang einer Kultur nicht auch den des Christentums nach sich zieht. Es hat sich mit der antiken Kultur eng verknüpft; als es aber mit ihr zum Sterben kam, hat es sich frischen Völkern zugewandt und deren Kultur mitentwickeln geholfen. Nach dem Zusammenbruch des mittelalterlichen Weltbildes hat das Christentum auch in der modernen Kultur sich geistig eingerichtet und selbst unter der Vorherrschaft eines Kant sich zu behaupten gewußt. **So kann das Christentum gerade darum die absolute Religion für alle Kulturen werden.** Die sittlichen Lebensideale der Menschheit hat das Christentum gleichfalls in Verbindung, aber auch in Distanz zu den seinen gebracht, so daß gerade auch eine Betrachtung der Geschichte der menschlichen Lebensideale Beweise für die absolute Stellung des Christentums zu bringen vermöchte. So ist die Absolutheit des Christentums sowohl negativ wie positiv als eine gesicherte zu bezeichnen.

Ökumenische Kirchenkunde des Protestantismus der Gegenwart.

Von Professor Werner Petersmann, Th. D.

Eine charakteristische Tendenz unsers gegenwärtigen religiös-kirchlichen Lebens geht deutlich aus Historismen und Isolationen heraus auf die **aktuelle Lebensganzheit.** Die Kirchen sind nicht mehr die bloßen blassen Repräsentanten der geschichtlichen Bekenntnislehrschriften, noch die in sich abgeschlossenen territorialen Institutionen der „guten alten Zeit." Sie sind lebendige soziale Körper mit allen möglichen Lebensfunktionen in Raum und Zeit der Gegenwart und stehen im ökumenischen Austausch der universalen Weltkultur von heute. Ganz deutlich geht daher das Interesse auf lebendige **„Kirchenkunde."** Von Kattenbusch und Loofs bis zu Mulert (1927) wandelt sich die „Symbolik," die Wissenschaft von den verschiedenen Lehren der Kirchen an Hand der historischen Bekenntnisschriften, der Symbolischen Bücher, in die „Konfessionskunde," die eine wirkliche Kunde von den Denominationen in der Aktualität und Ganzheit ihrer typischen Lebensäußerungen geben will. Und in der praktischen Theologie taucht seit Drews die Forderung der „Kirchenkunde" auf als eines notwendigen Abschlusses der Bildung des Theologen, in deren Literatur für Deutschland neben den Schneiderschen Jahrbüchern, Dibelius' „Jahrhundert der Kirche" (1927) und Schians „Handbuch für das kirchliche Amt" (seit 1927), Hans Georg Haacks nicht zu umfangreiches Werk über „Die evangelische Kirche Deutschlands in der Gegenwart" (Evangelische Kirchenkunde Deutschlands, 1929) zu empfehlen ist. Für eine Kirchenkunde Amerikas kommen als Material die Zensusarbeiten und die Jahrbücher des Federal Council wie Schriften von H. K. Carroll, W. A. Brown, Adolf Keller, E. H. Klotsche, auch jene jüngste, die soziale Seite leider tendenziös einseitig herausstellende von H. R. Niebuhr, u. a. in Betracht. Wie aber innen, so zielt auch außen der Blick auf die aktuelle Ganzheit des Lebens. Zumal seit Stockholm und Lausanne, in der lebendigen Sichterweiterung der notwendigen kooperativen Berührungen und Verflechtungen in der aufwachsenden Weltkultur schaut der Blick ins **„Oekumenische,"** auf die Gesamtheit des christlich-protestantischen Kirchentums. In diesem Sinn geht es heute um eine „ökumenische Kirchenkunde."

Eine ausgezeichnete solche Kirchenkunde des **europäischen** Protestantismus geben Adolf Keller, der europäische Sekretär des amerikanischen Federal Council, und George Stewart, Pastor der Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York, in ihrem Buch „Protestant Europe: Its Crisis and Outlof" (Doran, 1927). Der erste

Teil mit seinen neunzehn Kapiteln handelt von Europas kultureller Krisis in ihren verschiedensten protestantischen Aspekten; der zweite Teil, betitelt „The Scope of European Protestant Churches," führt den Leser durch die verschiedenen Einzelländer und ihren Protestantismus. Eine ganz konkrete anschauliche Darstellung stellt sich deutlich auf den amerikanischen Leser ein.

Aber auch Europa ist ja heute nur ein Teilgebiet, wenn auch das Mutterland, des Protestantismus. Eine wirklich **gesamtprotestantische** Kirchenkunde dagegen großzügigen und volksbuchartigen Stils stellt das Prachtwerk dar, das Stadtpfarrer Dr. G. Schenkel unter Mitwirkung führender Persönlichkeiten des kirchlichen und theologisch-wissenschaftlichen Lebens Europas herausgegeben hat als „Der Protestantismus der Gegenwart" (Stuttgart, Verlag Fr. Bohnenberger, 40 R. Mk.).

Hier ist eine hervorragende Ueberschau über den ganzen heutigen Bestand protestantischen Christentums mit einem Einblick in die tragenden und führenden Kräfte gegeben, in der glänzendsten buchtechnischen Ausstattung und illustriert in verschwenderischer Weise durch Wiedergaben modernster künstlerischer und photographischer Bilder. Es ist erstaunlich, daß — wie mir der Herausgeber schrieb — dies ökumenische protestantische Werk, das wahrlich in der Bibliothek jedes deutsch lesenden Pastoren und gebildeten Laien stehen sollte (!), in kürzester Zeit vergriffen war und eine Neuauflage hoher Zahl erforderte, auf dem relativ verarmten Kontinent, während wiederum seltsamerweise in Amerika bisher nur sehr wenige Exemplare abgesetzt wurden. Der zunächst erwartete Leser ist nach Lage der Dinge naturgemäß der des kontinentalen deutschen Kulturkreises. Dennoch ist der Ausblick aus dem Mutterland der Reformation stets ins Universale gehalten. Aus dem Gesamtpanorama der protestantischen Welt von heute aber, in fünfunddreißig ausführlichen Artikeln leitender Fachleute dargeboten, sind auf dem Hintergrund der kontinentalen Krisis zwei leitende, den Gesamtprotestantismus angehende Bewegungen eindrücklichst sichtbar, eine mehr die Innenentwicklung betreffende und die andre mehr die Außenproblematik.

Die **innere** Bewegung liegt in dem **kontinentalen Neudurchbruch des reformatorischen Evangeliumsverständnisses**, dem radikalkritischen Durchbruch durch die modernistische Entwicklung der letzten Epoche, unter Anerkennung freilich bestimmter kritisch-wissenschaftlicher Ergebnisse und unter Bemühung um moderne philosophische, szientifische und sozialethische Probleme mit aktuellstem Anspruchsstil der Struktur des edelsten Zeitgeistes gemäß. Diese Linie tritt, obwohl der Herausgeber mit ihr nicht zu sympathisieren scheint, zumal in den Beiträgen des philosophisch bemühten

Karl Heim, des lutherisch-konservativen Freiherrn von Pechmann, des reformiert-aggressiven Dogmatikers Emil Brunner und des in der evangelischen Jugendbewegung leitenden Dr. Stählin deutlich und vorwärtsweisend hervor.

Die andre, die **Außenproblematik,** um sie so zu nennen, ist **auf dem Grund der ökumenischen Weltbewegung das Sichgegenüberstehen der germanischen mehr lutherisch und reformatorisch bestimmten Evangeliumsauffassung und der angelsächsischen mehr reformiert und rationalistisch-empirizistisch bestimmten Konzeptionen.** Auf dem Hintergrund der Zurückdrängung des deutschen Protestantismus seit dem Krieg und dem Sieg des Angelsachsentums erhält diese Linie ihre aktuelle Schärfe und Krisenhaftigkeit; auf dem Hintergrund wiederum der ökumenischen Einheitsbestrebungen läuft sie aus in kooperativ und kontributiv eingestellter Kritik, Korrektur und Supplementierung. Auch diese Linie zieht sich durch alle Aufsätze noch so verschiedener Autoren hindurch. Beide Bewegungslinien aber gehen unsre eigene Zukunftseinstellung hier als Perspektiven ja dringlich an. Die erste muß auch darin schon für uns als aktuell erkannt werden, als man auch hierzulande bereits eine Wende von „anthropozentrischer" zu „theozentrischer" Einstellung sehen zu müssen glaubt, und als ein auf amerikanische Leser berechnetes jüngstes Buch des Holländers W. A. Visser't Hooft kritisch die schwachen Fundamente des bisherigen amerikanischen Social Gospel aufdeckt und seine Krisis herankommen sieht, abgesehen von dem Einfluß der übersetzten und nichtübersetzten Werke Barths und Brunners. Die andre ferner ist für unsre deutschentstammten amerikanischen Kirchen in besonderer Weise inbezug auf das Problem der „Amerikanisierung" wesentlich, das als Entscheidungsfrage lautet: schematisierende Amerikanisierung, der man weithin leider gänzlich problemlos und naiv entgegenzutreiben scheint, oder **synthetisch-kontributive „Amerikanisierung,"** wie sie, in der Form seiner kirchlichen Isolation freilich, das hiesige Luthertum versucht: einfache, lediglich das dominierende angelsächsische Wesen übernehmende oder **aus eigenem germanischen Wesen und Tradition beisteuernde und vermittelnd „Amerikanisierung"?** Wenn ich recht unterrichtet bin, steht man auch allgemein amerikanischerseits nicht mehr schlechterdings für die arme soziologische Standardisations-Schematik eines nivellierenden „Melting pot"; ein Zeichen wachsender Reife! Kurz und gut, gerade auch um dieser ökumenischen Aktualität willen sollte man das Werk sich besorgen! Ein kurzer Ueberblick über den Stand des Weltprotestatismus mit einigen eigenen Akzentsetzungen und für uns aktuellen Anmerkungen wird vielleicht nicht unzweckmäßig sein.

Das Schenkelsche Werk nimmt seinen Ausgang in der Schil-

derung von Leben und Geist des **deutschsprechenden Protestantismus,** also des „einen großen Astes am Baum neben dem andern des angelsächsischen," um zunächst ein deutliches introduktionelles Objekt zu haben (Erich Foerster). Das zumal hierzulande oft gescholtene nunmehr vergangene Staatskirchentum hat immerhin zwei positiv wichtige Charaktermale dem deutschen Protestantismus aufgedrückt. Es hat ihm einmal die volkskirchliche Einheitstendenz eingeprägt; und es hat ferner, nach Karl Rieker, das geistliche Amt in seiner Mitte auf seinen eignen urchristlichen Beruf zurückgeführt, es hat dem Pfarrer erst recht zum Geistlichen, zum reinen Theologen, zum Diener des göttlichen Wortes gemacht, indem es ihm alle Tätigkeit des Regierens aus der Hand nahm." Die Blüte der weltbeherrschenden deutschen Theologie steht mit ihm gewiß im engsten Zusammenhang, wie auch der reine Primat der Wahrheitsfrage über die der kirchlichen Politik. In der „Bekenntnis"-Diskussion hat die zahlenmäßig geringere Richtung der Neuprotestanten sich nicht gänzlich durchzusetzen vermocht. Aber müßte man nicht hinzusetzen, daß die neue, die Zukunft mit ihren Einflüssen leitende Theologie der Krisis hier neue Perspektiven eröffnet? Die Situation des deutschen Grenz- und Auslands-Protestantismus (Bruno Geißler) ist ein Kapitel voll von Unterdrückung, Schwierigkeiten, Ringen, Tragik und Not. „Es gibt außer den Juden kein Volk auf Erden, das eine so große Diaspora hat wie das deutsche." Eine ethische Richtungweisung für uns selbst hier sollte es sein, was bei diesem Rundgang über den deutschentstammten Protestantismus Nordamerikas gesagt wird: „Die Eigenart einer Nation liegt aber nicht nur in der Sprache; ja es gibt Beispiele für zähes Festhalten des Volkstums **trotz Aufgebens der Volkssprache,** wie etwa Irland, oder trotz Annahme der Doppelsprachigkeit (zum Beispiel in Südafrika die Buren). Und darin liegt offenbar die Aufgabe der Nationen, die in **das große Werden eines Volkes,** das wir **in Nordamerika** sich vollziehen sehen, **wertvolle Beiträge einzuliefern** haben: es gilt trotz der sprachlichen Anpassung an dem Sondergut, das Gott einem gab, in Treue festzuhalten und es in täglichem Zeugnis zur Geltung zu bringen. Der deutschstämmige Protestantismus Amerikas ohne Ausnahme, von der ‚Evangelisch-Reformierten Kirche' an über die **‚Evangelische Synode'** (unierten Typus tragend) bis hin zu den Lutheranern von Wisconsin, Iowa und Missouri, sind sich dieses Berufes bewußt . . . ." Diese Sinnbestimmung stimmt übrigens genau überein mit der, die im Antwortschreiben des Präsidenten des deutschen Kirchenbundes D. Dr. **Kapler** an Generalpräses Dr. Baltzer auf seine Einladung zur Entsendung eines deutschen Delegaten zur letztjährigen Generalkonferenz in Rochester hin deutlichst zum Ausdruck kommt, die leider im

Bericht des „Friedensboten" sehr mißverständlich plaziert worden ist: „. . . . Wenn ich jener Aufforderung zu meinem Bedauern zu entsprechen nicht in der Lage bin, so darf die Synode gleichwohl dessen versichert sein, daß der Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenausschuß alle Ihre Bemühungen zur **Wahrung des deutsch-reformatorischen Erbes** mit lebhafter Teilnahme und mit dem Wunsch verfolgt, daß es **auch unter schwierigen Verhältnissen** gelingen möge, dieses Erbe zu behaupten und sich immer stärker **auswirken** zu lassen . . . ." Sind wir auf diesem Weg einer **organischen** Amerikanisierung? (Die Unterstreichungen hier wie allermeist sonst von mir hinzugefügt.) Im reformierten deutsch-schweizerischen Protestantismus (Hadorn, Bern) ruht die Frömmigkeit des Volkes noch heute auf dem Heidelberger Katechismus und daneben auf den Gellertliedern. Die Hinwendung zu der Theologie der Reformatoren ist für die geistige Richtung der jüngeren Pfarrerschaft überaus bezeichnend. Der Protestantismus in den romanischen Ländern (A. Kuntz, Straßburg), der Westschweiz, Frankreich, Italien, Belgien, Spanien und Südamerika ist im Gegenteil zu dem germanischen Protestantismus meist die Sache einer oft sehr geringen Minderheit, die, fast durchweg kalvinistischer Struktur und französischer Sprache, missionarisch in ihrer Umgebung steht. Nicht unwesentlich ist für den Protestantismus Frankreichs, daß zu den 650,000 französischsprachigen Reformierten 300,000 deutschsprachige elsässische Lutheraner hinzugetreten sind. Der Protestantismus des **Nordens** (Edvard Rohde, Bischof zu Lund) dagegen, in Dänemark, Schweden, Norwegen und Finnland, dessen hervorragende Führerfigur Nathan Söderblom war, ist stärkst bischöflich-lutherisch, dem deutschen am meisten verwandt und weithin von der deutschen Theologie beeinflußt, von volkstümlichen Erweckungsbewegungen wieder und wieder erfrischt.

Die großen heute weltbeherrschenden englischsprechenden Länder stellen einen **angelsächsisch-reformierten Typus des Protestantismus** dar, der dem germanisch-lutherischen kontinentalen Typus eigenartig gegenübertritt. Das kirchliche Leben in **Großbritanien** (D. Dr. Dibelius, Berlin) ist bestimmt durch die politisch-katholisch orientierte Staatskirche von England, in der die hochkirchliche Partei die Führung hat, auf der einen Seite, und die reformierten Dissenterkirchen, die im National Free Church Council zu einer Einheit zusammen gefaßt sind, auf der andern Seite. Das religiöse Leben spielt sich sich bei dem **politisch-empiristischen** Instinkt und Interesse des Angelsachsen vor allem ab als „Kirchlichkeit" mit Biblizismus, Sonntagsheiligung und zielbewußter **Aktivität,** mit starker alttestamentlich-reformierter, unreflektierter Selbstsicherheit, das „auserwählte" Volk zu sein, und mit moralistischem, untheologisch praktischem „Common-sense." „Das ergibt Mangel an Tiefe, aber eine

ungemein praktische Stoßkraft des ganzen kirchlichen Lebens." Der angelsächsische methodistische Geist beeinflußt nahezu das gesamte protestantischreligiöse Leben des **nordamerikanischen** Erdteils. Daß der amerikanische Protestantismus (A. Keller, Zürich) in der Dominante seines Praktikalismus und Aktivismus **ein pionierhaft kolonialer Ableger des typisch angelsächsischen Empirizismus** ist, hätte fundamental herausgearbeitet werden müssen. Er hat in seinem Pragmatismus und jugendlichen Optimismus **„dynamische** Phantasie," die mit der Entfaltung höchster und oft edelster junger Energie allerdings zugleich sich in einer oft gefährlich flächenhaften, breiten Betriebsamkeit auszuwirken droht. Die mannigfaltige bunte Kirchenwelt der Freikirchen rückt aus dem Stadium des isolierenden Denominatianalismus heute in das Stadium der Einigungsbewegungen. Aber schließlich finden diese „ihre größte Kraft nicht in einem verschwommenen Allerweltschristentum, sondern in der überzeugten Zusammenfassung kraftvoller und ihrer Eigenart bewußter kirchlicher Gruppen, die trotz ihrer Verschiedenheit gemeinsame Aufgaben sehen und anfassen. Der Denominationalismus bedeutet in der kirchlichen Demokratie Amerikas einen notwendigen Pol, der die reiche Lebensfülle der Amerikanischen Kirchen, ihre individualistische Eigenart, ihre persönlichen Anstrengungen vor dem Zerfließen oder der Auffaugung durch allgemeine farblose, kirchliche Gebilde schützt." Und klar und deutlich ist dann der Ausblick auf die modernen **gesamtprotestantischen** Beziehungen (der aber damit zugleich eine innere amerikanische Vermittlungsaufgabe der betreffenden kontinentenstammten Kirchengruppen aufweist!) „Seit der Weltkirchenkonferenz von Stockholm ist die Berührung und Auseinandersetzung mit dem gesamten westlichen und vor allem dem amerikanischen Protestantismus zu einer großen **Weltaufgabe** geworden. Davon werden beide Seiten ihren Gewinn haben. Eine einheitliche Gesamtfunktion des protestantischen Kirchenkörpers wird erst möglich sein, wenn die **Tiefe des europäischen Denkens, die Wärme und Innigkeit,** die aus unsrer religiösen Kunst und Erbauungsliteratur spricht, sich verbindet und **zusammenwirkt mit der religiösen Dynamik und dem Missionseifer** des amerikanischen Protestantismus." So der stark für die „Dynamis" des amerikanischen Protestantismus eingenommene Europäische Sekretär des amerikanischen Federal Council! Aehnlich, aber in kritischerer Schärfe, weisen drei deutsche Bücher, die an dieser Stelle genannt werden sollen: Lic. Erich Stanges „Vom Weltprotestantismus der Gegenwart," D. Heinrich Fricks „Das Reich Gottes in amerikanischer und in deutscher Theologie der Gegenwart" und Lic. Hermann Sasses „Amerikanisches Kirchentum." Der in Amerika dominierend gewordene Typ der evangelischen Freikirche (Bischof

D. John Nuelsen, Zürich) kommt zu stärkerer Geltung mit den Ideen der Gemeinschaftskirche, der Trennung von Kirche und Staat und des finanziellen Freiwilligkeitsprinzips. Ein bekanntes charakteristisches Zeichen für den Protestantismus der Gegenwart sind die jungen kirchlichen Einheitsbestrebungen (Oberkonsistorialrat D. A. W. Schreiber, Berlin), die in **Stockholm** und Lausanne gipfeln. Uebrigens sollte von angelsächsischer Seite doch nicht ganz übersehen werden, daß die Weltkonferenz des sozialen Evangeliums Wirklichkeit geworden ist „auf germanischen Boden (Stockholm) unter lutherischer Führung" (Söderblom). Anderseits wären angesichts des übermächtigen Schwergewichtes und Aktivismus des angelsächsischen Christentums, das mit einem politisch-kulturellen Hintergrund engst verknüpft in die Erscheinung tritt (Staatskirche des britischen Imperiums usw.) Tendenzen einer gewissen Zurückhaltung seitens des in Versailles vergewaltigten und versklavten Deutschland ja wahrlich erklärlich genug. Die **Mission** steht heute in einem modernen Kampf erwachender Weltreligionen (H. Frick) und Nationalkulturen und arbeitet in entsprechenden kritischen Umstellungen auf christliche eingeborene, sich verselbständigende Volkseigenkirchen hin, die den Geist des Landes und der besonderen Geschichte eines jeden betreffenden Volkes atmen.

Die konfessionelle Lage der Nachkriegszeit ist durch ein ungeheures Anwachsen des **römisch-katholischen** Selbstbewußtseins und Kulturwillens charakterisiert (H. Hermelink, Marburg). Der evangelische Bund zur Wahrung der deutsch-protestantischen Interessen (W. Fehrenhorst) und der Internationale Verband zur Verteidigung des Protestantismus (D. G. Ohlemueller) stehn auf der Wacht. Was aber charakterisiert den protestantischen Menschen? Das hat Karl Heim hier und ausführlicher in seinem Buch **„Das Wesen des evangelischen Christentums"** mit **modern-reformatorischen** Durchblicken herausgemeißelt. Dem Katholizismus, den übrigens mit nachfühlendem Sinn als Idee und Erscheinung Fr. Heiler in einem starken Band vortrefflich gezeichnet hat, ist die „mystische" Haltung wesentlich, die auf eine „unio mystica" tendiert, auf eine im letzten Grund unernste, mehr oder weniger impersonal gerichtete, unnüchtern ekstatische Aufhebung des verantwortlich-ernsten Einandergegenüberstehens von Ich und Welt, Ich und Du, Ich und Gott. Dem gegnüber ist die **protestantische Haltung personal, klar und streng, verantwortlich-nüchtern „unmystisch"** die des Subjekts gegenüber Welt, Du und Gott. Das aber in zwei sich überhöhenden Stadien! Im **ersten jugendlich-ungebrochenen Stadium,** dessen Beispiel Lessing sein mag, steht der protestantische Mensch noch in der Gewißheit der meisternden Fähigkeit seiner denkenden Vernunft und seines sittlichen Willens. In das höhere **zweite Stadium** tritt er,

wenn die Einsicht in die Schrankenhaftigkeit seiner erkenntnismäßigrationalen (Kants Kritik) und willensmäßig-sittlichen Kraft (Luthers Klosterkämpfe) radikal durchgebrochen ist und der „Glaube" als Vernehmen des biblischen Offenbarungswortes Gottes, auch gegen die Vernunft, und als Annehmen seiner vergebenden, rechtfertigenden Gnädigkeit, auch gegen das Gewissen, die Einstellung beherrscht. Luther ist hier der reinste Typ. Hier wiederum tut sich die anglo-germanische Spannung auf, die Spannung zwischen der angelsächsischen kaltpuristisch-aufklärerischen Weltreformbewegung, die deutlich das erste Stadium repräsentiert, und der germanischen **lutherisch-eschatologischen Rechtfertigungskonzentration und realistisch-kritischen Rechtfertigungsperspektive,** die das zweite Stadium vertritt. Ueber das evangelische Christentum in lutherischer Ausprägung macht Freiherr von Pechmann eine tiefe persönliche Konfession in traditionell-reformatorischer neu reagierender Grundstimmung. Den christlichen Glauben nach reformierter Lehre sticht in sachlich-systematischer Geschlossenheit und neureformatorischer Aggressivität Emil Brunner heraus, die Uebereinstimmung Luthers und Kalvins von der Rechtfertigung bis zu den sozialethischen Problemen betonend und aufweisend und ein positives soziales Evangelium reformatorischen Charakters andeutend aus der biblisch eschatologischen Grundeinstellung zur Welt heraus. Hier bei Heim Pechmann-Brunner mit der modernen Spitze in Brunner gipfelt nach meiner Ueberzeugung der Protestantismus der Gegenwart. Hier stößt er nach meinen Einsichten in die Zukunft vor und weist auf echte Synthesen. Denn in der brennenden Frage „Kultur und Protestantismus" (R. Seeberg), in der übrigens von der „Schöpfung" und „Vorsehung" und vom „Beruf" her gesehen auch die echte international sich eingliedernde und kontributive „nationale" (nicht „nationalistische"!) Kultur ihren positiven religiösen Eigenwert hat (!), ist über die Probleme des Presseweesens (A. Hinderer, Berlin), der Frömmigkeit in der Dichtung (R. Guenther, Marburg), der bildenden Kunst (Dr. von Merz, Stuttgart), der Kirchenmusik (Smend), der Frauenfrage (G. Bäumer und P. Müller, Otfried) und der Inneren Mission (Mahling, Berlin) hinaus die soziale Frage, im weitesten Sinn genommen, die brennendste (Generalsekretär D. Johannes Herz, Leipzig). Die soziale Bewegung aber, die ja endlich überall kirchliche Anerkennung gefunden hat, wird, nach meiner Horoskopie, der Entwicklung und Wende der **„modernsten" Theologie** gemäß, durch ihre idealistischen Enthusiasmen und Krisen hindurch ihren reformatorischen Charakter gewinnen, wie in ihrer Art ja auch deutlich die „Jugendbewegung" (Stählin, Münster) und die liturgische Bewegung (vergleiche das Vernenchener Buch und die andre neuste Literatur). In dieser

Richtung liegt die ökumenische gesamtprotestantische Aufgabe angedeutet: als kontributive Kooperation und Synthese des angelsächsisch-reformierten Empirizismus und Aktivismus und der germanisch-lutherischen Glaubenstiefe und -innerlichkeit, zur Herausstellung des klar fundierten, **wahrhaft „biblisch-reformatorischen" „Social Gospel."** Welche ideellen Vermittlungs- und Beitragsaufgaben in dieser ökumenischen Perspektive an ihrem Teil auch **unsre** Synode durch Herkunft und Schicksal haben sollte, dürfte durch alles hindurch klar genug geworden sein.

Ist die Heilige Schrift noch immer die „Alleinige Richtschnur unsres Glaubens und Lebens"?

Pastor G. Fr. Schuetze, S. T. M.

In unserm Bekenntnisparagraphen bekennt die Evangelische Synode die Bibel als die alleinige und untrügliche Richtschnur des Glaubens und Lebens. Wahrlich, ein gutes Bekenntnis (1. Tim. 6, 12), unter dem unsre Väter gelebt haben, und durch das unsre Synode groß geworden ist. Wir werden wohl daran tun, an diesem Bekenntnis kräftig festzuhalten. Wohl bekennen wir uns zu diesem Glaubenssatz, und auf Konferenzen und Synodalversammlungen wird immer wieder Nachdruck darauf gelegt. So sieht die Theorie schön aus; aber wie steht es mit der praktischen Anwendung dieses elementaren Lehrsatzes? Nur allzuoft hören wir von agnostischen Gelehrten und — leider auch — von wohlmeinenden aber übel beratenen Theologen, daß die moderne Wissenschaft, besonders aber die exakten, empirischen Wissenschaften, die Naturkunde, so weit vorgeschritten sind, daß wir in einigen Dingen uns ihr anpassen müssen in den **„gesicherten Ergebnissen"** derselben, und daher den bibilischen Maßstab nicht in allen Dingen anlegen können.

Letzten Grundes besagt diese Behauptung, daß die Heilige Schrift nicht mehr in allen Dingen die **alleinige und untrügliche** Richtschnur ist. Man hat uns gesagt, die Bibel wolle ja gar nicht ein Lehrbuch für Verstandeswissenschaften sein. Gewiß, das geben wir zu, daß die Bibel nirgends diesen Anspruch erhebt. Aber andrerseits will doch die Bibel der einzige Grund sein, auf dem unsre gesamte Weltanschauung, unser ganzes geistiges Leben ruht. Es erscheint mir darum sehr angebracht zu sein, zu untersuchen, ob und wie weit wir noch die alte These, daß die Bibel alleinige und untrügliche Richtschnur des Glaubens und Lebens ist, angesichts der neueren Weltentwicklung annehmen können, oder ob wir ein großes Frage zeichen hinter diesen Satz machen müssen?

Um diesen Anspruch der Bibel prüfen zu können, müssen wir uns zuerst über ihren Ursprung und ihr Wesen klar werden. Was ist die Bibel? Jeder Christ gibt zu, daß sie Gottes Wort ist. Wohl, aber was bedeutet das? Die Heilige Schrift ist nicht die Offenbarung Gottes an die Menschheit. Eine Offenbarung ist die Darstellung irgendeines Gegenstandes, nicht nur Gottes, im menschlichen Bewußtsein. Die äußere Natur wird unserm Bewußtsein dargestellt durch ihre Einwirkung auf unsre sensorisches Nervensystem. So ist die Offenbarung Gottes eine Selbstdarstellung im menschlichen Bewußtsein, nicht unmittelbar durch die Bibel, sondern vermittelt durch unsre Sinne, das Hören oder Lesen des göttlichen Wortes. Des-

halb ist die Bibel nicht die göttliche Offenbarung selbst, sondern ihr Mittel, ihr Dokument, der Bericht von ihr.

Haupterfordernis eines jeden Berichts ist seine Genauigkeit und Treue. Ein Bericht ist nicht die Tatsache selbst, sondern eine genaue und zuverlässige Wiedergabe der Tatsache. Die Bibel ist also nicht der Bund, den der Herr mit dem Menschen in seiner Offenbarung schloß, sondern dessen historische Bezeugung. Die ältere Theologie sagt darum von der Bibel aus Authentizität und Inspiration. Letztere ist zweifach, real und verbal. Wenig Streit hat sich über die Realinspiration erhoben; über die Verbalinspiration aber können wir nicht so ohne weiteres hinweg gehen.

Im Prinzip ist die Verbalinspiration die einzige haltbare Thesis: aber angesichts der überwältigenden Fülle von Textverschiedenheiten, wirft sich die Frage auf: **Welches ist der Text, der die Verbalinspiration für sich beanspruchen kann?** Ja, wenn wir im Besitz der „ipsissima verba" Gottes wären, so könnten wir nicht umhin, diesem Text auch die Verbalinspiration zuzuschreiben. Aber nun haben wir erst einmal die drei bis vier großen Haupttexte, den Codex Sinaiticus (ℵ), den Alexandrinus (A), den Vaticanus (B) und den Ephraemiticus (C), alle aus dem ziemlich späten Alter des vierten und fünften Jahrhunderts. Dann sind noch die unzähligen Varianten dieser und andrer Codices, sodaß wir die Frage: Was ist der Urtext? unmöglich beantworten können. Deshalb können wir auch keinem der Texte Verbalinspiration zuschreiben. Es ist auch keine Hoffnung vorhanden durch irgend welche Funde noch den Originaltext zu entdecken. So müssen wir sagen: Der gegenwärtige Text ist nicht wörtlich von Gott inspiriert. Im Gegenteil haben wir ja Stellen, die wir als nicht inspiriert, sondern als unecht nachweisen können (cf. 1. Joh. 5, 7). So ist die Verbalinspiration wohl ein schöner Traum, aber nichts weiter. Vielleicht ist es auch göttlich gewollte Fügung, daß wir den Originaltext verloren haben; denn wer weiß, was für Götzendienst mit ihm (schlimmer als mit dem Unfehlbaren in Rom) getrieben sein möchte.

Daß die göttliche Offenbarung progressiv ist, wissen wir alle und stört unsre These nicht im geringsten. Wohl haben wir keine Gewißheit, daß die Offenbarung abgeschlossen ist, und daß nicht noch neue Offenbarungen Gottes kommen mögen. Aber das kann ja gar nicht anders sein: Gott hat seine Verkündigung stets den Bedürfnissen und der Fassungskraft der Menschen angepaßt. Wir glauben, daß ganz sicher noch eine neue Offenbarung Gottes am Ende der Tage stattfinden wird, wenn sein Reich in seiner Vollendung erscheinen wird. Aber darin liegt kein Zweifel an der Zuverlässigkeit der Bibel. Es besteht kein Widerspruch zwischen den verschiedenen Stufen der Offenbarung in der Vergangenheit

kein Offenbarungswort hat je einem früheren widersprochen, sondern haben nur zu der Fülle des Verständnisses von Gottes Ratschluß hinzugetragen. Nach dem Gesetz der Analogie dürfen wir dann erwarten, daß alle zukünftige Offenbarung mit der bisherigen in vollstem Einklang stehen wird. Wenn wir Gott noch nicht ganz erkennen, so ist es, weil wir für solche Erkenntnis noch nicht bereit sind.

Wenn aber die Verbalinspiration fortfällt und wir Gott nicht völlig erkennen können, kann die Bibel denn doch die alleinige und untrügliche Richtschnur sein? Wir können diese Frage leicht mit einem apodiktischen Ja oder Nein beantworten und damit die Debatte über diesen Punkt für abgeschlossen erklären. Aber kein Ukas oder Bulle hat je einen Menschen überzeugt, höchstens das „Laudabiliter subjecit" erreicht, nie aber einen Gewinn für die wissenschaftliche Forschung, für die Suche nach Wahrheit.

Mit der Bejahung der Frage und der Behauptung, daß die Bibel in ihrer jetzigen Gestalt alles und jedes enthält, was zur Erlösung des Menschen notwendig ist, haben wir eine dogmatische Glaubensstellung eingenommen. Diese ist aber für das theologische Gewissen nicht ausreichend. Sie ist wohl genug für den Sünder, dem um seine Seele Angst ist, aber für den denkenden Theologen, der bereit sein soll zur Verantwortung der Hoffnung, ist diese Lösung **nicht** ausreichend. Andrerseits aber wird die unbedingte Verneinung der Frage, die Leugnung der Fähigkeit der Bibel, Richtschnur zu sein, durch das „testimonium Spiritus Sancti" widerlegt, daß Millionen, auch gelehrte Theologen, darin ihr Heil und Leben gefunden haben. Mit einer einfachen Erklärung kommen wir also nicht weiter; wir müssen die Gründe dafür und dagegen gründlich untersuchen und dann unsre Schlüsse ziehen.

Beginnend mit den Gegengründen finden wir die angebliche Tatsache, wenn wir das eine Tatsache nennen dürfen, was nur angeblich so ist: Die Bibel steht in völligem Widerspruch mit den „gesicherten Resultaten" moderner Wissenschaft. Nun das heißt den Mund reilich voll genommen. Aber was sind „gesicherte Ergebnisse"? Wir werden auf die Anfänge der Erkenntnistheorie zurückgehen müssen. Die Naturwissenschaften rühmen sich, auf rein empirischen Grund zu ruhen. Nun ist eine Behauptung nur gesichert, wenn sie durch Experimente bewiesen oder durch scharf logische Schlußfolgerungen, die auf diesen Experimenten ruhen. Aber beruht die Naturwissenschaft (in allen ihren Zweigen, Medizin, Chemie usw.) einzig und ausschließlich auf solcherart gesicherten Wahrheiten? Ich möchte z. B. gern den Nachweis der Urzelle durch ein physikalisches Experiment sehen. Empirie ist ja ganz schön, so weit sie reicht, aber leider reicht sie nicht weit. Weder durch Sinnes-

wahrnehmung noch durch logische Beweisführung können wir den Ursprung des Weltalls beweisen. Alle Theorien über den Weltursprung leiden an derselben Schwäche, die man so gern der Theologie vorwirft. Sie müssen entweder am Anfang oder am Schluß mit irgendeiner unbewiesenen und unbeweislichen Größe operieren. Alle kühnen Behauptungen der Naturwissenschaftlicher sind gerade so dogmatisch wie irgendein Glaubenssatz der Theologen. Laßt irgend jemand uns durch ein Experiment den Ursprung des materialistischen Stoffes oder der Kraft beweisen; dann werden wir unsre Weltanschauung umkrempeln müssen. Aber so lange der Gelehrte nicht (was wohl nie geschehen wird) uns aus der Retorte des Chemikers ein Lebewesen, eine Urzelle, einen Homunculus produzieren kann, so lange, sage ich, werden wir uns an das Wort Professor Dubois Reymonds' halten müssen, der ein siebenfaches ewiges großes Ignorabimus annimmt, deren nicht das geringste der Ursprung des Lebens ist. Also die „exakten" Wissenschaften müssen auch mit unbewiesenen Wahrheitsannahmen operieren, die keine Wissenschaft beweisen kann, die aber im menschlichen Bewußtsein durch intuitive Anschauung vorhanden sind. Kants apriorische Kategorien sind auf Intuition ruhende Realitäten.

Muß also die Wissenschaft, wie die Bibel, auf unbeweisbare Axiome zurückgehen, so ist die Behauptung unhaltbar, daß beide prinzipiell verschieden seien. Uebrigens sollte man doch ein wenig vorsichtiger sein mit der Phrase „gesicherte Resultate der Wissenschaft." Vor Galilei war es ein Grundsatz aller Wissenschaft, daß die Erde das mathematische Zentrum des Weltalls sei, um die sich alles drehe. Jetzt wissen wir Theologen und Laien es besser. Ist denn das Kopernikanische Weltsystem mit der Bibel unvereinbar? Bitte, wie? Oder: Bis vor kurzem haben wir das Gesetz der Schwere für unbestreitbare Wissenschaft gehalten; nach der Einsteinschen Theorie scheint das aber durchaus nicht der Fall zu sein. Und wie lange wird die Einstein-Theorie stehen? Schon morgen mag eine neue Entdeckung unser ganzes Vorstellungsgebiet umändern und gesicherte Ergebnisse der Wissenschaft zum alten Eisen werfen. Jedes Zeitalter hatte seine eigene Art und Weise, Naturerscheinungen zu erklären, und zwar auf verschiedene Art. Die Behauptungen der Bibel stehen aber ohne stichhaltigen Widerspruch da. Deshalb dürfen wir nicht sagen, daß die Bibel in vollkommenem Widerspruch zu den Naturwissenschaften stehe. Vielmehr, wo ein anscheinender Widerspruch sich zeigt, müssen wir sagen, daß wir noch nicht in vollem Besitz aller dieser Frage zugrunde liegenden Gesetze der Vernunft und der Natur stehen.

Diese Erwägung sollte besonders unsre Stellung gegenüber den Bibelberichten von Wundern beeinflussen. Im 19. Jahrhundert ist

eine entschiedene Aenderung in der geistigen Einstellung zu den Wundern eingetreten. Früher galten die Wunder als Beweismittel für den Glauben, beinahe so kräftig wie „dicta probantia." Jetzt aber nehmen wir die Wunder, obwohl sie uns mehr oder minder verdächtig erscheinen, an, weil wir sonst glauben. Also nicht mehr: Wir glauben wegen der Wunder, sondern trotz der Wunder. Was sind Wunder? Für den naiven Geist ist das Wunderbare (mirabile) beinahe, wenn nicht ganz, gleich mit dem Wunder (miraculum). Wenn man etwas sieht, das über des Beobachters geistigen Horizont hinausgeht, so hält man es für eine Wirkung einer übernatürlichen Macht. Je weiter aber das Wissen fortschreitet, je kleiner wird die Zahl der Wunder. Es werden aber doch in der Bibel Wunder berichtet, die keine Wissenschaft erklären kann, wenn sie nicht in ganz ungeahntem Maße sich entfaltet. Was hat man denn gegen die Wunder einzuwenden? Man sagt, sie seien gegen Gottes Allweisheit, wenn er durch Eingriffe in das Naturgesetz seine eigene Schöpfung verbessern müsse. Das ist wohl wahr; aber: Bedeuten Wunder einen Eingriff in die Naturgesetze? Die Naturgesetze sind doch keine sittlichen, keine notwendigen Gesetze, sondern bezeichnen nur die bisher beobachten, also empirischen Ordnungen, in denen das Geschehen in der physischen Welt sich vollzieht. Wasser besteht z. B. aus zwei Teilen Wasserstoff und einem Teil Sauerstoff. Wenn wir nun Wasser fänden, das fünf Teile Wasserstoff auf einen Teil Sauerstoff enthielte, so wäre das ja kein Wunder, sondern nur der Beweis, daß unsre Kenntnis des Wassers nicht vollständig ist. Die chemische Formel für das Wasser ist H_2O. Das ist das Naturgesetz; aber es würde gerade so Naturgesetz sein, wenn die Formel lautete H_5O. Naturgesetze sind nicht notwendige Ordnungen. Ein scheinbares Durchbrechen dieser Ordnung mag auf ungenauer Beobachtung oder Berichterstattung beruhen, oder es ist ein Anzeichen davon, daß hier höhere, noch nicht beobachtete Gesetze obwalten. Durch Berechnung kam ein Astronom zu dem Schluß, daß in unserm Sonnensystem noch ein Planet sein müsse. Er lenkte seine Aufmerksamkeit auf den berechneten Platz und entdeckte den Planeten Neptun. Das war kein Wunder, sondern eine Entdeckung einer Naturkraft. Wunder sind also keine Durchbrechungen von Naturgesetzen, sondern nur Hindeutungen auf die Existenz höherer, bisher unbekannter Naturgesetze, die die bekannten Naturgesetze überragen und daher zeitweilig außer Kraft setzen. Wie der Magnetismus die Schwerkraft aufheben kann, so können auch andre Kräfte zeitweilig ausgeschaltet werden. In dieser Erklärung der Wunder liegt nichts Unwissenschaftliches, und wir opfern auch nichts von unsrer Behauptung der Allweisheit Gottes.

Ein weiterer Einwand gegen Wunder ist, daß Wunder der Willkür Tür und Tor öffnen. „Wenn es Wunder gäbe, könne ja irgend etwas geschehen." Dieser Einwand wirft dem Allmächtigen Willkür vor und läßt unbeachtet, daß Gott nicht nur höchste Macht, sondern auch höchste Vernunft ist, und höchste Liebe. Allerdings innerhalb dieser drei Erscheinungsformen der göttlichen Selbstdarstellung kann irgend etwas geschehen (vgl. Matth. 19, 26). Aber Gott kann nichts tun, was wider seine Natur ist. Er kann nichts Kraftloses tun; denn er ist Macht. Er kann nichts Törichtes tun; denn er ist Vernunft. Er kann nichts Böses tun; denn er ist Liebe. Seine Vernunft und seine Liebe begrenzen seine Macht. So ist in Gottes Wesen kein Raum für launische Willkür oder blöde Tyrannei. Wenn aber Willkür nur das bedeuten soll, was wir nicht vorher sehen und berechnen können, dann werden wir allerdings am Tage des jüngsten Gerichts sehen, was wir nicht gedacht haben. An und um diesen Tag herum wird es noch mehr Offenbarung und noch mehr Wunder geben. Professor Harris teilt in seinem Buch „The Self-Revelation of God" die Wunder in zwei Gruppen, wesentliche und zufällige. Letztere sind unbedeutend für die Erlösung. Ob Christus viertausend oder fünftausend in der Wüste speiste, ist für unsre Seele gleichgültig. Das mag man annehmen oder nicht. Darauf kommt wenig an. Aber die andre Gruppe der Wunder ist wesentlich für die Erlösung der Menschen, wie die Schöpfung, die erste Darstellung der Liebe Gottes, der Regenbogen als die Zusicherung der Ewigkeit der Verheißungen, die Fleischwerdung als der Anfang der Liebesarbeit der Erlösung, die Auferstehung als die Vollendung seiner Erdenarbeit und Anfang seines Himmelreiches, das sind wesentliche Wunder. Wer die verwirft oder anzweifelt, stellt sich außerhalb des Reiches Gottes.

Wenn wir die Wunderberichte der Bibel in diesem Licht ansehen, wie können sie dann gegen den Wert der Bibel sprechen? Wenn wir die Bibel verwerfen, weil wir die Wunder nicht verstehen können, dann stellen wir uns selbst trotz unsers beschränkten Verstandes als den Maßstab des Geschehens in dieser Welt auf. Und wenn jemand sagt: Wohl will ich die wesentlichen Heilswunder annehmen und glauben, aber nicht die zufälligen Heilungswunder, heißt das nicht Mücken seihen und Kamele verschlucken? Nehmen wir das denkbar größte Wunder an, die Liebe Gottes, warum wollen wir uns der geringeren Erweisungen derselben Liebe weigern? Der Christ in seiner Jugend sagt: „Credo, quia absurdum," der Jüngling spricht: „Credo, ut itellegam"; aber der reife Christ sagt schlicht: „Credo." Mit der Zeit werden wir auch verstehen, was uns jetzt in einem dunklen Licht erscheint. Weit entfernt, gegen die Bibel zu reden, sind die Wunder nur ein weiteres Zubel

in ihrer Krone. Die Bibel würde nicht die Bibel, d. h. die Urkunde der Liebe Gottes sein, wenn sie keine Wunder berichtete.

Ein andres altes Schlachtroß, daß immer wieder gegen die Autorität der Bibel geritten wird, ist die „Evolutionstheorie." Wenn es ganz ernstlich der Bibel an den Kragen gehen soll, holt sie sich auch wohl noch die Geologie als Helferin. Aber wir fürchten uns vor keiner Theorie. Man vergesse nicht, die Evolution ist nur eine vielleicht bequeme, aber doch nur eine Theorie. Auch sie kann uns keine andre Auskunft über die Entstehung der Erde geben, als die Bibel. Die Evolution muß mit Annahmen und intuitiven Realitäten, mit Postulaten und Daten rechnen, sei es Kraft, Stoff, Bewegung oder sonst etwas. Die Evolution kann uns nicht verraten, woher die Persönliche Schöpferische Vernunft, Gott, kommt. Sie ist also nicht ganz empirisch, also nicht als Argument gegen die Bibel zu verwerten. Das geologische Argument gegen die sechs Schöpfungstage, ist geradezu kindisch, da die Bibel nirgends von vierundzwanzig Stundentagen redet. Vielmehr wickelt sich die Schöpfung im biblischen Bericht so strikt evolutionär ab, daß man den Verfasser für einen verkappten Evolutionisten halten möchte. Es ist ein evolutionistisches Axiom, daß die Natur stets vom Geringeren zum Höheren vorschreitet. So geht auch der Bibelbericht vor, Fische, Vögel, Säugetiere, Menschen. So ist die Evolutionstheorie nichts als die Methode, in der Gott das Werk seiner Schöpfung vornimmt. In diesem Sinn kann man sich die Evolution gefallen lassen. Aber dann verdient sie es wahrlich nicht, daß man von dieser uralten Binsenwahrheit so viel Aufheben macht.

So weit, so gut. Aber wir haben nicht nur mit Vorwänden zu tun, die von atheistischen, materialistischen, vorgeblich wissenschaftlich eingestellten Bibelbestreitern vorgebracht werden, sondern auch von ernsten Wahrheitssuchern, die wohl die Göttlichkeit der Bibel anerkennen, aber behaupten, daß sie in großen Stücken veraltet und von der Welt überholt ist. „Die Bibel ist unvereinbar mit dem ‚Zeitgeist'."

Hier wird behauptet, daß Jesus offenbar Vorstellungen gehabt habe, die von der Wissenschaft als irrig erwiesen seien, wie z. B. über die Besessenen. Die ärztliche Wissenschaft hat auf Grund der beschriebenen Symptome diese Krankheit als nervöse Störungen, als St. Veitstanz oder als epileptische Krämpfe diagnosiert. Der geliebte Arzt hat in der Tat die Symptome so genau beschrieben, daß eine Erkenntnis der Krankheit nach so langer Zeit noch möglich ist. Nun streiten wir ja durchaus nicht, daß die Medizin weit über den Gesichtskreis der Alten hinweg vorgeschritten ist. Aber was beweist das? Zunächst sind es Matthäus, Markus und Lukas, die die Krankheit der Besessenheit zuschreiben, nicht Jesus. Sodann

gibt es in der Tat Krankheiten, bei denen auch die moderne Medizin wohl täte, geistige oder geistliche Besessenheit anzunehmen. Erst seitdem der gröbste Materialismus in der Medizin herrscht, ist diese Annahme als unwissenschaftlich verschrieen. Drittens, selbst wenn wir annehmen, daß Jesus diese Anschauungen geteilt habe, so dürfen wir nicht vergessen, daß Jesus wahrer Mensch gewesen, also den Anschauungen seiner Zeit unterworfen. Ob wir mit der älteren Theologie Kenotiker (d. h. annehmen, daß Jesus während seines Erdenlebens wirklich keine Allwissenheit gehabt) oder Kryptiker (Jesus hatte wohl die Allweisheit aber machte von ihr keinen Gebrauch) sind, genug, beide Theorien erklären angebliche Irrtümer unsers Heilandes. Kurz: Andre medizinische Ansichten vermögen nicht unser Zutrauen zu der Autorität des Wortes Gottes zu erschüttern.

Wiederum sagt man: So viele Weissagungen der Bibel sind nicht erfüllt und ihre eschatologischen Hoffnungen sind als unhaltbar aufzugeben. Wir wollen nun gern zugeben, daß viele Weissagungen **noch** nicht erfüllt sind. Aber was schadet das? Vergleiche Hebr. 2, 8. Der Judasbrief und der zweite Petrusbrief sind ja schon Trostschreiben für solche, die sich grämen wegen der Nichterfüllung der Verheißungen. Das kann uns doch nicht dazu treiben, den Verheißungen der Bibel den Glauben zu versagen. Noch ist nicht aller Tage Abend. Die Weissagung wird ja noch erfüllet werden. Nach dem Gesetz der Analogie dürfen wir auch hier sagen: So viele Verheißungen Gottes sind wörtlich erfüllt, daß wir den Schluß ziehen dürfen, daß auch die, welche noch nicht erfüllt sind, doch noch erfüllt werden. Meistenteils wird eine Ableugnung der Bibel wohl auf den Willen zurückzuführen sein. Wer den Willen Gottes tun will, der wird erkennen, ob diese Lehre von Gott sei, und umgekehrt: Wer den Willen nicht tun **will**, der wird auch die Autorität der Bibel angreifen.

Was nun die eschatologischen Hoffnungen der Bibel angeht, so müssen wir wieder zwischen Jesu Lehre und den Schlußfolgerungen der Jünger scheiden. Tatsächlich war die Hoffnung in der ältesten Kirche allgemein, daß die Parusie unmittelbar bevorstehe. Dafür stützte man sich auf Jesu Worte wie Luk. 21, 31 f.; Matth. 16, 28. Diese Worte wurden falsch verstanden, als ob die Wiederkehr Christi und das tausendjährige Reich unmittelbar bevorständen. Aber in Wahrheit verstand Jesus unter dem Kommen seines Reiches die Vollendung der Erlösung auf Golgatha und die Auferstehung. Da haben wir in einer Nußschale den Kern der eschatologischen Mißverständnisse des Neuen Testaments. Daß sich auf diesem Mißverständnis eine Reihe falscher Hoffnungen aufbaute, ist unbestreitbar; aber ein falscher Schluß kann nicht einen richtigen

Vordersatz umstoßen. Eine falsche Lehre, gegründet auf falscher Exegese, kann nicht die ganze Bibel umwerfen.

Der am schwersten zu beantwortende Einwand richtet sich gegen die sittlichen Lehren des Herrn. Man sagt: „Wir geben zu, daß Jesu Lehre herrlich ist, in der Tat so herrlich, daß kein Mensch sie befolgen kann." Die sozialen, geschäftlichen und volkswirtschaftlichen Zustände der Jetztzeit machen eine Befolgung des Sittengesetzes Christi einfach unmöglich. Ja, hat denn auch nur einer von diesen, die solche Reden führen, es schon einmal ernstlich versucht, darnach zu leben. Wo nicht, da ist nach Joh. 7, 17 zu urteilen. Gewöhnlich wird dieser Einwand von solchen erhoben, die zweien Herren dienen wollen, und die Unmöglichkeit davon Gott in die Schuhe schieben anstatt sich selber. Gewiß. Jesu Ethik setzt einen idealen Gesellschaftszustand, das vollendete Himmelreich voraus. Aber wir können doch nicht die Urkunde der Lehre Jesu dafür verantwortlich halten, daß wir die Verwirklichung dieses Ideals noch nicht erreicht haben. Im Gegenteil müssen wir sagen, daß die Bibel nicht Gottes Wort wäre, wenn sie nicht Jesu Lehre predigte. Jesus kennt keine Kompromisse. Er weiß, daß die menschliche Gesellschaft nicht ist, was sie sein sollte, daß es zu Anfang anders war (Matth. 19, 8) und daß es wieder anders werden soll. Als solche Vorschriften, die dereinst ganz erfüllt werden, haben wir seine Behandlung des sechsten, siebenten und neunten Gebotes in der Bergpredigt anzusehen. Aber die Nichterfüllung seines Gesetzes, die er selbst voraussah, kann nicht sein Gesetz selbst umstoßen. Ich werde nie zugeben, daß die Sittengesetze Jesu mit irgendeinem gesellschaftlichen Zustand unvereinbar sind. Es mag hart sein, nach ihnen zu leben, aber es ist möglich.

Wir haben in kurzen Zügen, die Argumente gegen die Bibel überflogen. Wir sollten nun noch die positiven Gründe für dieselbe besprechen. Aber der Platz will es nicht erlauben. So wollen wir nur noch sagen, daß der Anspruch der Bibel uns Richtschnur und Leiter zu sein oft angegriffen, nie überwunden, für immer bestehen wird. Man wird nicht an Jesu Wort vorbei können: Himmel und Erde werden vergehen, aber meine Worte vergehen nicht (Mark. 13, 31).

EDITORIALS

"JAKE AND LENA"

The title of this editorial may seem ludicrous to some and unintelligible to others. We will, therefore, explain ourselves and hope that we shall be able to make it plain in the first place and not without sense in the second.

"Jake and Lena" like "Amos and Andy" is a famous Radio number. Its performers, Gene and Glenn, are clever artists. One of them can so modulate his voice that he seems to be two persons, a man and his sweetheart; and the other does the singing and playing that gives variety to the act. The two are extremely popular in Ohio at least. They receive, so it is said, five hundred dollars a night for putting on their act. It is different every time and the people "go wild over it." Some time ago, when they performed here in person, people were lined up three abreast, on each side of the sidewalk for a block, waiting for their turn to get in. The large theater counted 185,000 guests that day, the largest number ever reached at any time, by any theatre in this town. The actors performed a wedding scene and suddenly the groom disappeared. Where did he go? was the query; and five hundred telegrams poured in that very night, offering suggestions where he might be found. It is said that their mail averages one thousand letters a day!

Now we listened in once or twice when the act was on and the thing seemed so inane, so utterly silly and cheap to us that we never tried it again. Our son-in-law, who is also an admirer of this popular nonsense, told us in explanation that one must listen at least three or four times before he can really appreciate the humorousness of the piece. He would not want to miss any number of it, whether it was early in the morning or late at night. And so it is with others. When we make the round among our members and it is "Jake and Lena" hour, the young people, at least, will not turn it off to listen to the words that fall from our lips: they want "Jake and Lena," cost it what it may.

Now isn't this a phenomenon that demands consideration and gives cause for reflection? If you strike the popular taste the people will hear you, they will admire you and pay you royally. But if you can't do that you are a dead number and the world will leave you alone. It is far from us to blame the people if they have a strongly developed sense of humor—we have something of that

ourselves, although it seems a later development—but for a whole state to go crazy over a set of clever laugh-producers is certainly an experience we can't readily explain.

Goethe says: "Sound reason has always been with the few only," but will that satisfy the few who belong to the minority?

For the same rule obtains not only in the picture show or the radio world; it holds good in the world of our own experience. A minister may have a good sermon, a fine delivery, a knowledge of literature and history, and bring all these fields under contribution to his pulpit work. As like as not people will say: "He preaches over our heads; his sermons might be all right for college students, but give me "the heart to heart talk," the food for the common people; I can't warm up to this highbrow stuff." And all this while one doesn't dispense philosophy or heavy intellectual food at all. One only doesn't strike the popular fancy, somehow.

It is an unpleasant situation, a disheartening experience. It seems the more a minister reasons in his discourse, the more he tries to solve problems or to show faith is consistent with science and proven facts, the less the majority like his sermons, at least in our Evangelical church.

It is also one of the things we must reconcile ourselves to in our private life: The more exacting our expectations are in point of intellectuality, the less "fun" we have along the ordinary avenues of life. People of discrimination can't enjoy 99 100% of the picture show: the average book will be unpalatable to them. For jazz music they have a perfect detestation. They can't follow the crowd in all this. They have only the consolation that what they *do* enjoy is more worth enjoying. They can say with the Savior. "I have a food ye know nothing of" and they are blessed indeed if, being in the minority, they don't sour on life but, like Him, know that the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit are the real blessings of life.

SHE GIVES HIM FIVE YEARS

It is sometimes interesting to hear intelligent laymen or laywomen express their opinion on leading men of the church. We had that pleasure a short while ago. A lady who had been a member of our church at Springfield, Mo., many years ago, paid us a visit. She had not had much schooling originally: just what the parochial Lutheran school of her native place could give. But life had taught her much. Her married life was blessed with three daughters and she and her husband gave them all a college education. As so often is the case, the parents wanted the children to have the advantages that they themselves had lacked. The oldest girl was a "Dean of Women" in a college and is now in New York

City studying for the degree of Ph.D. at Columbia University. She wants that degree, her mother said, if she dies over it. Her very health is threatened by the heavy work before her. Such is one of the consequences of the exaggerated emphasis educational circles put on those letters behind your name. Much more sensible seemed to us the remark of a teacher in our local schools, who has that degree but said: "I'd rather have a 'Mrs.' before my name than a 'Ph.D.' after it."

Well, our friend, now a widow, had spent the last six months with that degree-hungry daughter in New York, and had employed her time well. She went to many concerts, operas (German and otherwise), lectures, museums. She saw all the sights and heard many of the famous preachers of the metropolis. Naturally E. Fosdick was one of them. To go to New York and not to have heard him is to go to Rome without seeing the pope. What did you think of Fosdick? we naturally inquired. Her answer was not as enthusiastic as might have been expected. Of course she gave due credit to his ability. She knew he was supposed to be in a class by himself. She granted he was a great speaker and a great drawing card. You had to come early to be sure of a seat. But she had by no means succumbed to the spell that so many have yielded to. She said, she heard him with attention, with pleasure and with appreciation. Still, he left her cold; she would ask herself in going out, "Now what have I taken along?" and she couldn't answer that question. Spiritually he had left her untouched and unblessed, although she is by no means a conservative churchwoman of the orthodox kind, she has not a closed mind.

She said, *"I give him five years."* Just imagine: while thousands flock to his church, while the young people adore him, while he is the master Modernist, while the radio gives him every Sunday a numberless audience! In five years she explained, he won't be a preacher any more, he will be a lecturer. He is not a pastor now, visits no one, doesn't shepherd the souls, is neither at the sick-bed nor at dying moments. He just preaches, or, rather *lectures,* for his sermons are lectures, every one of them. How to reconcile science and religion, that is his great topic—and religion has to make the sacrifices, not science.

So spoke this woman, or nearly so. She wasn't quite sure whether the new religion was going to prevail. It seemed to please the young people, it semed to be the trend of the times. But the old religion had something she wouldn't miss. It gave the "heart" more than the new.

We assured her that the old religion, the religion of Jesus and

the Reformers, was going to come into its own again. She wouldn't express any opinion on this judgment.

We thought we must pass on this experience to our readers. It is now before them. Let them ponder the question: it is the question of the day. We are sure about the issue, but let each one decide for himself.

SELF-RELIANCE AND FAITH

The Federated Churches of our city have now closed the eleventh annual series of Lenten meetings. Nearly all churches united in them, with the exception of the Missouri Lutherans. These had separate meetings in Holy Week. Both of these noon-meetings in Holy Week, the papers said, were well attended. Then the report went on, quoting one of the speakers: "Self-reliance is a great thing in business, but a bad thing in religion." When we read that, we knew at once that this statement had been made by the Lutheran speaker; we knew it before we read in the paper that Rev. H. B. Wind of Buffalo had said it to the Lutheran audience. We knew it because we were aware of the heavy emphasis the Lutherans put on faith in God. For them to say, self-reliance is good in religion, would have been almost a fall from grace, certainly a false theological note.

Self-reliance, he said, is good in business. Doubtless the men who control large industries need a goodly amount of it. Just now the steel men of Youngstown and those of Bethlehem have been in conference as to merging the two huge concerns. The Youngstown men were against it. They lost, but the pictures of them in the papers showed that they were of the fighting kind. The thought came to us, these men have more courage, grit, self-reliance than the average minister.

Does then the ministry, does religion fail in developing self-reliance? Does it fail to make men more courageous, resourceful and venturesome than does business? In answering this question let us first state that the business men mentioned are exceptional men; they are leaders, they direct affairs and control capital altogether out of the ordinary. I would be unfair to expect the minister of an ordinary congregation to show as much enterprise, foresight and reckless energy as those possess. But would the average minister compare unfavorably in these elements with the small business man? We think not.

We must compare the leaders in one branch with the leaders in another. At once there spring into consciousness Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, or Luther, who ushered in a new age, or a

host of others, not so great and conspicuous, but who have all made their contribution to the progress of humanity by the vigor, courage and staying qualities of their personality. They had self-reliance to a large degree. But it was based on faith, it had a religious source. It was nourished as was that of Jesus, on fellowship with the father. They were nothing in themselves and uttered it often with the greatest candor and humility. But they by no means minimized the work of God in their souls. They could say with Paul—to a varying degree: "I have done more than all of them, but not I but God's grace that dwelleth in me."

We think that is what the Lutheran speaker meant. Our self-reliance must be founded on our relying on God and his promises. Without *such* self-reliance, how could we face our audience unafraid on Sunday, or at special occasions? Or arise in meetings and give an impressive account of our opinions. Here we often haven't enough of the right self-reliance.

The business man may have self-reliance based on experience, on ability, on the determination that comes with office responsibility. If he had also faith in God and a due conception of what his wealth and influence could mean if used, not for selfish purposes, but for the general welfare, things in the business world, relations between capital and labor would not be so strained as they are.

Der Katechismusunterricht.

Während wir dies schreiben, feiern wir die stille Woche und die Konfirmation ist hinter uns samt dem sechsmonatlichen Unterricht. Es liegt nahe, von dem letzteren und seinem Erfolg uns Rechenschaft zu geben. Indem wir vom Katechismus sprechen, denken wir nicht an den neu revidierten insbesondre. Er hat in Vereinfachung der Sprache alles getan, was von ihm erwartet werden konnte. Unsre Frage ist: Ist das Lernen des Katechismus im allgemeinen von wirklich besonderm Wert? Im Jahre 1929, dem vierhundertsten Jubeljahr des Lutherischen Katechismus, haben wir von der Volkstümlichkeit dieses Büchleins und seiner großen Geschichte viel gehört. Er ist auch ein Volksbuch, kernig, klar und kräftig geschrieben. Der zweite Artikel insonderheit ist eine unübertroffene Auslegung des Zentralpunktes unsers Glaubens. Wer diese und den Katechismus Luthers im ganzen antastet „beißt auf Granit."

Dennoch, von dem Auswendiglernen der Fragen und Antworten des Katechismus — irgendeines Katechismus - - halten wir wenig. Uns persönlich hat er wenig geholfen. Wir waren fünf

zehn Jahre alt zur Zeit des Konfirmandenunterrichts; wir erinnern uns der Erörterung der Unterscheidungslehren seitens unsers frommen — stark lutherischen — Lehrers wohl. Das Uebrige haben wir vergessen, es hat auf uns keinen bleibenden Eindruck gemacht.

In unsrer eigenen Katechismusarbeit mit den Konfirmanden sehen wir vom Lernen der einzelnen Fragen und Antworten **fast** ganz ab. Wir brauchen den Katechismus hauptsächlich, um die „fünf Hauptstücke" zur Unterlage unsers Unterrichts zu machen. Dieselben scheinen uns in der Tat die unentbehrlichen Grundelemente unsers Glaubens und Lebens zu sein. Wer kann denn — für sich und die Jugend, die ihm befohlen — ohne die zehn Gebote, das Glaubensbekenntnis, das Gebet und die Sakramente auskommen?

Dennoch die herrlichen Bibelverse — **unter** den Fragen —, die Trost- und Mahnworte der Schrift daselbst, sind uns viel wichtiger. Wir lassen die besten unter ihnen auswendig lernen, nicht die Fragen. Und noch eins, die biblischen Geschichten sind uns viel wichtiger als der Katechismus. Bei ihnen verweilen wir mit ganzer Liebe und heller Begeisterung. Wir sagen den Konfirmanden: Was immer ihr sonst vergeßt und in die Ecke werft, behaltet die biblischen Geschichten, lest sie wieder und wieder, bis sie ein Teil eures inneren Lebens werden.

Wir glauben hiermit uns im Einklang mit der modernen Pädagogik zu befinden, da sie auch vom Praktischen mehr hält als vom Theoretischen, vom Konkreten mehr als vom Abstrakten, vom Plastischen mehr als vom Analytischen, vom Leben mehr als von Lehrpunkten.

Doch ob wir mit ihr im Einklang sind, oder nicht: unser Herr brauchte in seiner Verkündigung die Geschichte, das Gleichnis, vom Leben genommen, ins Leben einführend. Wer könnte ein besseres Vorbild finden in der Volksbelehrung als **unsern Meister?** Selbst Paulus, der große Kirchenbauer, muß hierin von dem Meister die Segel streichen.

„Ein wenig Grütze unter der Mütze, ist gar viel Nütze; aber ein fröhlich Herz hinter der Weste, das ist das Beste."

So ungefähr lautet ein Vers, den wir in der Schule gelernt haben. Damals wußten wir nicht, wie wahr dies sei. Daß „Grütze," Verstand, Anlagen, viel wert sei, wußten wir, aber daß ein fröhlich Herz so hoch im Preis stehe, wußten wir nicht. Im Lauf vieler Jahre erst haben wir das recht eingesehen. Wir waren gestern im Hause einer noch jungen Frau. Sieben oder acht Kinder befanden sich in der Küche — die andern Zimmer waren kalt, um Kosten zu sparen. Die Nachbarn bedauerten die Frau wegen ihrer großen Kinderschar; sie selbst, obwohl das nächste schon im Anzug war, war gutes Mutes. „Ein fröhlich Herz . . . ." Wir haben einen Amtsbruder, beinahe achtzig Jahre alt, Invalide, von Gebrechen heimgesucht, allein mit seiner alternden Gattin. Er hält sein Haupt noch hoch, er klagt kaum je, er jammert nicht: er hält fest! Ihm gegenüber wohnt eine Frau, vielleicht nahe an sechzig. Sie hat Diabetes, sie verliert ihr Augenlicht — und dennoch ist sie gutes Mutes. Sie war immer voll Witz und Humor und diese Gabe hat sie noch nicht verlassen. Wunder aller Wunder! Diese Frau ist fröhlicher anscheinend als viele, die Gesundheit und Augenlicht besitzen. Sie klagt nicht, sie bejammert sich nicht, sie redet nicht von ihrem Kreuz, ausgenommen zu den nächsten Bekannten.

Sind nun alle die Genannten oder andre ähnliche tapfere Menschen groß im Glauben, oder ist ihre Fröhlichkeit eine Frucht ihrer geistlichen Förderung? Das könnte man wohl kaum in allen Fällen sagen. Es ist Naturgabe; es ist ihnen von einer gütigen Fee in die Wiege gelegt, und sie selbst haben wohl kaum gewußt, wie reich sie waren.

Wir andern, wenn wir von solchen Fällen hören, sagen: So könnte ich nicht sein, das ist mir nicht gegeben. Aber wenn die Natur es uns versagt hat, können wir nicht von der Gnade erwarten, daß sie uns das „Freuet euch im Herrn allewege!" lehrt? Sagt nicht der Apostel: „In allen diesen Dingen (schweren Trübsalen) **überwinden** wir **weit** um des willen, der uns geliebet hat?" Wir lassen diese Frage unbeantwortet, wir schieben sie nur dem Einzelnen ins Gewissen, möge er sie nicht vergeblich in seinem Herzen erwägen.

The Christian World

The Trend Toward Humanism *

CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER

The most significant tendency of modern religion is its inevitable trend toward humanism. Inevitable, because man can not endure the mental unbalance of retaining magic in his religion when he has banished it from all other departments of his life.

When man removed magic from alchemy and studied the laws of the elements, chemistry was born.

When he eliminated divination from astrology and learned the laws of the stars, astronomy rapidly developed as a science.

And when he dares to excise the supernatural from religion and study the phenomena and laws of religious experience, similar progress will be made in that sphere.

Most unscientifically, theology, the so-called "queen of the sciences," has begun with the unknown, has assumed the existence and attributes of God, and has thus based its whole structure on a supposition.

The new science of religion begins with the known phenomena, namely, the religious experience of men, and works toward the unknown.

The humanizing of religion has been postponed far too long, but there has been a reason for the delay. People have dreaded the very radical changes they knew would be necessary.

Humanism isn't simply another denomination of Protestant Christianity: it isn't a creed; nor is it a cult. It is a new type of religion altogether. It is a new way of looking at religion. You have to make over and broaden your definition of religion to get humanism in at all. The humanist splits the seams of all the old coats of religion when he tries them on. The new wine has burst the old wineskins.

Apparently there has been a suddenness in the advent of humanism. A few months ago one heard of it only in a very limited circle; to-day the newspapers and magazines are full of it. But the suddenness is only apparent. Humanism has been for some time quietly growing in the minds of a few, waiting until the spread of scientific knowledge should prepare the way for its appearing. Persons familiar with trends in religious thought have for years sensed some mighty change impending.

The revolution in religion they foresaw is here. By revolution in religion we do not mean mere reforms in religions, such as the

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*Address by the founder and leader of the First Humanist Society of New York, at the Saturday Discussions Luncheon of the National Republican Club, Saturday, January 25.

reinterpreting of the cardinal tenets of orthodox Christianity in the light of modern thought, or the socializing of the religions which were formerly concerned only with the salvation of the individual. Nor do we mean the Back to Jesus and Back to Buddha movements, nor the higher criticism of Bible, Koran, or Vedas.

These were but preparations for the revolution, shadows cast by the coming event. The revolution is nothing less than the complete revaluation of religion itself on a humanistic basis rather than a supernatural one. This revaluation is producing a religion so different in type from its predecessors that some critics claim that it is no religion at all. And many people whose knowledge of science has made them humanists have left the churches thinking themselves no longer religious, when their very humanism is itself a new religion.

There are sixty million people in the United States alone who are not on the lists of adherents of any religious organization, whether church, synagogue, or society. These sixty millions are not to be reckoned as not desiring any religion. It is probable that most of them are simply dissatisfied with the religions they have known, the religions which emphasize the supernatural.

To these people who are seeking a satisfactory religion for to-day humanism comes as something long sought and almost despaired of. The letter-files of humanist preachers are growing plethoric with correspondents' expressions of delight at having found "at last a religion one can believe and live by," "a common sense religion for to-day," and "an inspiring faith for modern folk."

Humanism is still very young, but its adherents exhibit the enthusiasm which characterizes the rise of a new religion. And there is a sanity and wholesomeness about it which renders its followers immune to the fanatic excesses which have been exhibited in some religions.

From California to New York, and even in India and Japan, humanist groups are in process of formation, and every week brings fresh news of the growth of the new movement. Not all these groups agree in all details of belief and practise, but certain common elements appear. One notices in all of them, naturally, an emphasis on the value of sincerity and a corresponding scorn of hypocrisy. They all stress the importance of living the good life here and now, rather than worrying much about what is to come afterward. They repeat frequently the need of self-development by the individual, and lay equal emphasis on social co-operation and a sense of social responsibility. They find inspiration in contemplating the upward sweep of evolution and the noble lives of the great heroes of human progress.

The point upon which they are unanimous and most insistent is the rejection of belief in the supernatural, which belief they seem to consider not only of no value in religion, but even detrimental to progress in religion. It is because humanists reject the supernatural that many maintain that humanism can not be a religion at all. Certainly if you assert that religion is the worship of the supernatural, then humanism is not a religion. But religion is wider than super-

naturalism. As scientists who specialize in studying the phenomena of religion are pointing out, there are wide areas of religion where the supernatural does not enter at all.

Philosophy was once largely metaphysics, but the metaphysical element has been left to one side in several recent systems of philosophy. In fact, there are wide areas in philosophy where metaphysics does not enter at all. It is just as inaccurate to say that religion without the supernatural is not religion as it is to say that philosophy without metaphysics is not philosophy at all.

Recent definitions of religion by expert students of religion are much broader than those formerly taught. Contrast Allan Menzie's definition in his History of Religion (1895), "Religion is the worship of higher powers from a sense of need," with that of E. S. Ames in "The Psychology of Religious Experience" (1910), "Religion is the consciousness of the highest social values." Or take Immanuel Kant's famous definition in his "Critique of Practical Reason" (1788), "Religion is the recognition of all duties as divine commands," and compare it with A. Eustace Haydon's in "The Quest of the Ages" (1929), "Religion is the shared quest of the good life."

According to Kant and Menzies, representatives of the older type of thought, humanism would hardly be called a religion, but under the definitions of Ames and Haydon it certainly would.

Religion is the attempt to unify one's personality and relate it to the world without. Hitherto men have thought that this process necessarily involved the worship and propitiation of certain supernatural beings, but the advance of science has made such a belief seem rather naive, almost childish.

The really revolutionary character of humanism is best seen when one realizes that humanists not only do consider belief in the supernatural necessary in religion, but even hold that today such a belief may defeat the purpose of religion. For if religion seeks to unify the personality and relate it to the world without, any belief which hinders either part of the process is detrimental.

In Bible times, men could believe in gods and demons; they knew no better way of explaining certain phenomena. Jesus believed that the way the earth and man came into being was by direct creation by the hand of Jehovah. He believed that disease was due to demon-possession. He believed that wrong thoughts were whisperings of Satan. He believed that good thoughts and good deeds were due to the presence of God or the Holy Spirit within him.

The man of the twentieth century who is familiar with even the commonplace of scientific truth classifies all the creation stories, whether in Hebrew literature or in the lore of the South Sea Islands, as primitive myths. He accepts evolution as the method by which the earth and man arrived at their present state. He knows that disease is due to germs; he has seen them through a high-school microscope. And he knows that it is just as inaccurate to ascribe his good thoughts, aspirations, and actions to a god as it is to blame the devil for his bad thoughts and deeds.

Such primitive ideas do not aid a man when he seeks to-day to get a unified view of his life and his relations to others and to nature. They only confuse him and defeat his highest purposes. He can not reconcile an ancient religion with his modern life. And when some earnest theist informs him that if he does not believe in the supernatural he can have no religion, he decides that he must give up religion in order to preserve his intellectual and emotional and moral integrity.

With the coming of humanism, however, the modern man finds a religion which does fit in with his scheme of things. Not that he welcomes it as an easy let-down in his standards, permitting him to take a moral vacation and to do as he pleases. For from it, for while humanism is easier to understand and believe, it is harder to live by, for it requires more personal consecration and devotion to the highest ideals and a deeper sense of social responsibility than does orthodox religion.

Long ago, centuries before Christ, when philosophic humanism had developed in the magnificent Greek civilization, Socrates counseled every man he met: "Know thyself." In the intervening centuries, however, man has exerted his powers mainly to discover the world outside. Only recently has he turned his instruments upon himself. In years to come, the twentieth century will probably be known as the era of the discovery of human personality.

Recent researches in psychology have also prepared the way for the coming of humanism, a positive constructive religion built upon man's faith in his own powers. If humanists were to make a creed, the first article would be: "I believe in man."

To some, such a statement sounds sacrilegious, because they have for so long been accustomed to the idea of the fall of man and his inherent depravity, and have repeated so many times the false aphorism, "Human nature never changes." They have thus created in their own minds a barrier to belief in the limitless possibilities of mankind.

There is good scientific justification for believing that man is really just beginning his career upon this earth, and that a million years or more of development, mentally, morally, and spiritually, lie before him. What may not be accomplished if man dares to believe in his own future and to take his vast responsibilities to those who come after him more seriously than has been possible when religion has centered his attention on "other-worldliness!"

Man's recent accomplishments, however, in the spheres of radio communication and the conquest of the air, have gone far to create in him a confidence in his own latent powers.

It becomes immediately apparent that the chief concern of humanism is to release the pent-up reservoir of human energy, to explore the uncharted territory of the mind, and to raise to its highest efficiency the entire personality.

Therefore humanists are not only opposed to all movements, institutions and practises, however religiously sanctioned, which tend to

cramp and confine the human personality and to prevent its proper development, but they are also actively engaged in helping those movements which tend to release, develop and expand the life of man.—*Christian Leader.*

A Visit to India

SHERWOOD EDDY

Two scenes will always remain indelibly stamped upon my mind from this visit to India. The first will be the picture of Mahatma Gandhi sitting cross-legged at his spinning wheel, like a Francis of Assisi suddenly plunged into the twentieth century, calmly discussing for India the course of action taken by Washington, Jefferson and Patrick Henry in the American Colonies in 1776, as contrasted with the alternative of a gradual evolution like Canada into dominion status. In either case, whether for independence or dominion status, Mr. Gandhi's own leadership will be non-violent.

The second scene I am sure to remember will be the fifteen thousand delegates and attendants at the Indian National Congress at Lahore, at the opening of the New Year 1930, impassioned, aflame with patriotic loyalty, deciding after heated debate whether they shall adopt a policy of co-operation or non-co-operation, for dominion status or independence, as India stands at the parting of the ways. This congress will be a microcosm of divided India with its eight principal religions, some 222 different languages, 2,300 separate castes and subcastes in the one-fifth of the human race peopling this sub-continent.

To understand the situation in India to-day we must recognize the significance of the various elements that compose it.

1. There is first of all the strange figure of Gandhi himself, perhaps the most unique man in the world, seeming at first sight a frail, almost toothless old man and mystic saint, yet the very incarnate soul of India, quietly, unalterably, determined that his country shall be free. Gentle as a little child, yet he is as hard to move as a mountain, once his mind is made up. He is the center and pivot of the Congress and of the whole situation in India today. He alone can unite the Nationalists or lead the masses.

2. There is the Indian National Congress, a voluntary organization representing the politically-minded, educated leaders of the country, chiefly nationalists who unite their efforts for political self-determination and for needed social reforms. In addition to the 15,000 who assemble at the annual Congress, there are over a hundred thousand men educated in English, their only common language, who can be counted upon for leadership in their various communities. As I have met these leaders throughout India, I am convinced that they can produce a group of men equal to the British or American Cabinets in intellectual ability and often in integrity of character. India's two greatest dangers, however, will be widespread bribery and corruption, which already exists among lower officials, and communal divisions between religions and castes.

3. The third and chief element in the situation is the plodding, poverty-stricken masses of this teeming population, more than nine-tenths of whom are illiterate. With only an acre of arable land per capita for the whole population and 125,000,000 landless casual workers, where the average income is eight cents a day, or $27.75 a year, India is the poorest country in the world. Millions of these people will follow Mr. Gandhi, in any campaign he seriously promotes, but it is more than an open question as to how far he will have a united India behind him in a movement for civil disobedience at the present time.

4. The seventy million Moslems constitute one-fifth of the population. They come of a fighting race, backward in education. The majority of their educated leaders desire dominion status or some form of self-government for India that shall safe-guard their own interests in all the provinces, and give them one-third of the seats in the National Assembly. In spite of the bitter feud between Moslems and Hindus in the past, fomented by the fatal system of communal electorates, their trusted leaders believe they can unite with Hindus in self-government, protecting the legitimate interests of each community as have the French and English in Canada.

5. The native states, containing more than a fifth of the population, constitute a difficult problem. The people of most of them are far behind those of British India in education and civil liberties, often with autocratic, irresponsible and extravagant rulers. If they are left out of the newly-constituted India they may honeycomb the country with disloyal "Irelands." If they are brought in they will form a possible reactionary and divisive force, but the difficulty is not insuperable.

6. The Youth Leagues of India are for the most part patriotic but inexperienced, irresponsible and radical in their outlook, demanding complete independence by any means, violent or non-violent. In any struggle they will doubtless break out in crimes of violence. They do not look to the non-violent Gandhi but to Jawaharlal Nehru, the president of the Congress, for leadership, and although not represented in the Congress, the pressure of their demands will be felt. With them on the left we may reckon on many of the forces of organized labor in the Trade Union Movement. Only a small fraction of the sixteen millions in industrial pursuits and the one and a half million laborers in factories are organized. Among certain railway and factory unions, especially in Western India, communist organizers have been at work, and underpaid, ignorant workers in a country so desperately poor as India are likely to furnish fruitful soil for Russian propaganda and methods of violence. Youth, communist labor and a few intellectuals thus constitute the extreme violent left wing of the nationalist movement.

The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, by his announcement of Nov. 1, 1929, proposing a Round Table Conference to discuss the new constitution and promising ultimate dominion status for India, for a time united all liberal public opinion behind him. But the debates in the British Parliament destroyed much of the new faith and hope he had evoked.

The Indian leaders responded to the Viceroy's announcement in their Delhi manifesto with four demands—complete amnesty for all political prisoners; the Round Table Conference convened to draw up a new constitution for dominion status; members of the Indian National Congress to have predominant representation at this conference, and a change of heart manifested by the Government in a greater measure of conciliation and preparation for full dominion status. Mr. Gandhi, representing the majority of the Congress leaders, quietly but firmly demanded the fulfilment of the above four conditions by Dec. 31, 1929, declaring that if this was not done, and early dominion status assured, then "the Congress would organize a campaign of non-violent non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse taxation and in such other manner as may be decided upon." This was the resolution of the Congress adopted last year at Calcutta.

After interviewing both men, it seems to me that at present the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi are so far apart politically that even if they meet in conference, as proposed, agreement or reconciliation seems impossible. The Labor Government and the Viceroy are perhaps powerless to grant these conditions, while Gandhi and the Indian leaders feel equally powerless to satisfy the demands of the Congress with anything else. The situation is, therefore, grave and serious in the extreme. Ready or unready, divided or united, the inalienable demand for liberty is as deep among millions in India to-day as it was in the American Colonies in 1776, or in Canada when she was demanding complete self-government.

I shall always remember Gandhi at his spinning wheel with the warm light of the Indian sun falling upon him as he sat upon the floor of his simple room and talked with us quietly of the approaching crisis in India's history. His bodily presence, like that of the Apostle Paul or of Socrates, is at first sight weak and unprepossessing: a small, emaciated figure, weighing less than a hundred pounds, bearing the marks of days of fasting, of five imprisonments, and of long hours of work, beginning daily with his hour of prayer at four every morning. Three times he has been beaten by mobs and once left prone in the gutter as one dead. He has a round, close-cropped head, large ears, a rather long nose, a quiet, pensive face, save when it lights in a smile or ripples with laughter as it so often does. But this only reveals his few remaining front teeth. It is characteristic of the man that he makes use of artificial dentistry at meal time for practical purposes, but will have no "false" teeth for the sake of appearance between times.

After three days spent in his Ashram or social settlement, he impressed us as the most childlike, the most transparent, the most lovable of men. His whole character is centered in his unique passion for truth and reality. His autobiography reveals the most inflexibly honest man of our times. His principle of "satyagraha," meaning truth-force or soul-force as opposed to brute force, leads logically to "ahisma," meaning non-killing, non-injury and non-violence to any living being. This is embodied in his character as love, sympathy and

identification with all human suffering. He believes that moral suasion or love, and love alone, is sufficient to meet every situation in life. This in turn leads to non-possession or poverty, whereby one shall not keep for himself anything which he does not really need. This results in the progressive simplification of life. His utterly selfless humility and shyness are strangely coupled with quiet boldness. It is difficult to realize that this frail man was once silent and timid before all strangers, a dumb failure in his first law case, a confessed "coward" afraid to sleep in the dark, yet now is perhaps the most fearless man in the world. His description of the former Indian leader Gokhale might be applied with even more truth to himself: "Pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault. He was and remains for me the most perfect man on the political field." He is a saint strayed into politics who is working in the spiritual, social and political spheres as one undivided whole of life.

If he is not a "mahatma" or great soul we never saw one. Yet the word is not permitted in his Ashram and it is painful and humiliating to him to have it used. One sees his humanity and his humor breaking like sunshine through the lowering clouds of fierce criticism and controversy when he answers the questions of his critics in passages like the following: "Are you really a Mahatma? If so, will you define the word?" "Not being acquainted with one, I can not give any definition." "Did you ever tell your followers that you are not one?" "The more I repudiate, the more it is used." "Is it a fact that formerly you treveled third-class in railway trains and now you travel in special trains and first-class carriages?" "Alas! the correspondent is correctly informed. The Mahatma-ship is responsible for the special trains, and the earthly case for the degradation to the second-class. You think I am on an eminence. I assure you that I am not aware of that. I am, however, on the top of a volcano, which I am trying to turn into hard incombustible rock. It may erupt at any moment before I have succeeded. That unfortunately has always been a possible fate for a reformer."

When we arrived at the Ashram we were met at the train by an employer, and a labor leader who, under Gandhi's influence, had renounced his comfortable circumstances to identify himself with the cause of the unorganized and exploited mill hands in the seventy mills of Gandhi's city. At meal time we sat on the floor with the hundred and fifty inmates of the Ashram beside another employer who had already given away about half a million dollars, or half his wealth, and was devoting all his time to Gandhi's crusades. On all sides we see the remarkable influence of this man.

Our day in the Ashram begins with morning prayer at four a. m. for half an hour. Out under the stars of the Indian sky on the river bank, sitting in the clean sand, it is a moving experience to hear the prayers and hymns of this reverent religious worship. After a bath, exercise and study, comes the first of the three daily meals, all sitting upon the floor eating their simple fare. Gandhi slips in last and sits with the children. His three daily meals consist of one bowl of curds

with an equal amount of fruit, oranges and sweet limes. He eats no bread or vegetables in his present frail state, and he never ate meat in his life, save with guilty conscience as a Hindu schoolboy. After breakfast his day is occupied by correspondence and endless interviews, including some bodily labor, consisting for him of an hour at his spinning wheel while he continues his interviews. This spinning is for him almost a sacrament. He longs that the impoverished farmers, with a third of their time spent in enforced idleness, shall recapture the lost cotton trade which he believes Britain killed with a seventy per cent duty on India fabrics. If they can make their own homespuns in idle hours they can save the annual drain of $2000,000,000 for Manchester cotton goods, etc., from abroad. To him this spinning for the farmer spells bread, character and final freedom from an enervating foreign rule. After supper and the hour of evening prayer, Mr. Gandhi reclines on his cot out under the stars and answers our questions in an informal discussion about God, about prayer, about guidance, and how far his actions may be controlled by God's Spirit. Sitting there in the moonlight, you forget that he is a Hindu, you forget his frail body, you sit reverently and begrudge the limits of his time and strength after seventeen hours of work, as you commune with a truly "great soul" in touch with God and more closely identified with suffering humanity than any man of our time.

An Ashram was originally a forest dwelling where an ancient rishi (or seer) trained his disciples. This company of a hundred and fifty men, women and children, is one of two such social centers where Mr. Gandhi is training workers for the service of the country. Like his own life, the Ashram is based upon truth, love, and chastity (or the observance of continence or celibacy both for married and unmarried who are solely devoted to the service of the country, although normal married life is expected for those not thus called to special service). This implies the control of the palate, or "eating only for sustaining the body and keeping it a fit instrument for service," together with poverty, or the non-possession of anything one does not really need for the simple life. The service for all in training includes spinning, manual labor even the most menial, the removal of untouchability from the depressed outcasts, sanitation, agriculture, national education in character, etc., etc.

Gandhi has received greater devotion than any man in India since the time in Gautama Buddha, some twenty-five centuries ago. He has aroused new hope and a sense of human worth in many of the sixty million untouchables and outcasts, and he has done more to break down the evils of the caste system among the 220,000,000 Hindus than any man in history. He has given to a war-torn world the hope of a new way of passive resistance; he has perhaps made possible the substitution of a moral equivalent for war; and for revolution a non-violent means that may prove more effective than the age-long custom of destruction and bloodshed as a means of obtaining liberty. If he should succeed he conceivably might demonstrate the moral power of vicarious sacrifice and the spiritual application of the Sermon on

the Mount to practical politics as more potent than all the guns of Prussian militarism, than all the ships of Britain or all the dollars of America. In him India has found her soul, has found a voice.

This I am writing before I start north to attend the National Congress at Lahore, thirty-three years after I attended my first congress here in 1896. This vast sub-continent has moved since then. It is a new generation and a new India to-day.

P. S. After long discussion the National Congress at Lahore decided to fall back upon the resolution adopted at Calcutta. Mr. Gandhi and the leaders of the congress were not satisfied either that their four demands had been met, or that the Government really intended to grant India dominion status at the Round Table Conference. He has, therefore, taken his stand with quiet determination and with the backing of the majority of the congress, to carry out his campaign for non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience. This will mean tension, strife and trouble developing in various parts of India, and the beginning of a moral fight to a finish with the British Government for India's freedom. Mr. Gandhi has now fulfilled his warning that if dominion status was not promised or as good as granted by Dec. 31 he would join forces with the Independence Party of the left wing. This is serious indeed and ominous for the future.—*Christian Leader.*

The Preacher and His Books

By the Rev. Wallace H. Finch, D.D.,

Pastor of Chester Hill Church, Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

Books are the tools of the preacher's work shop. A carpenter, if he is an ingenious man and a patient one, can do work of a sort with only a jack-knife and a hammer. But he will do better work if he have a saw, and a plane, and a brace and bits, and a try-square, and a spirit-level, and a chest full of the other things that human ingenuity has contrived to aid a carpenter in his work.

A blacksmith can do some work with a blow-pipe, a few bricks to hold his fire, a flat surface of some kind, and something to hammer with. But he will do better work if he have a forge, and an anvil, and a hammer, and some tongs, and a vise, and a fuller, and a sledge or two, and a hardy, and a chisel, and such like. A blacksmith with a blow-pipe and some fireclay may have been a useful man in the beginning of the iron age, but his usefulness is highly problematical now.

Books are a preacher's tools. They are not his material. The material he works with is human minds and human hearts; and that material is the most difficult and the most valuable material in the world. If a carpenter spoils a piece of wood in the shaping of it, he can throw it away and get a fresh piece and try again. If a blacksmith burns a piece of iron in forging it he can throw it into the scrap-heap and the loss will not be very great. But human minds and hearts are too valuable to scrap when they are cut or burned.

A bungling workman dealing with such material is an extravagance the Church cannot well afford.

A preacher's books are his tools. Some are fundamental, he can do nothing without them. His Bible, his concordance, his dictionary, his commentary and his encyclopædia are to him what the hammer and saw are to the carpenter, or the hammer and the forge to the blacksmith. But these are not the only tools he needs. He needs many others. He needs some books for a day, and some for a week, and some for a month, and some for a year, and some for all the days of his life.

He needs different kinds of books. There is no work in the world so diversified as the work of a preacher. A man may become a specialist and have only one kind of books; he may become a scholar and have only one kind of books, he may become a scientist and have only one kind of books; but if he is to become an acceptable preacher for twenty or thirty or forty or fifty years he must have all sorts of books.

A Frequent Objection

The average preacher cannot afford to buy books. His stipend is small, he has a family to support, his people are not literary and do not realize what books cost; he simply cannot afford to buy books. What shall we say to that?

There is only one thing to say: he cannot afford *not* to buy books. The preacher in the twentieth century who doesn't buy books is doomed. If he is a man of discrimination he will not need to buy many books at one time. If he is a man of studious and noble curiosity he will get more from one book than many men get from twenty books. But buy books he must. He may make shift to get along for a month without meat, or even for a year, and his health likely will not suffer much; but if he lives a year without books his mind will suffer, and his imagination will suffer, and his purpose will suffer, and his people will suffer.

His Workshop

Just as books are the preacher's tools, so his study is his workshop. It ought to be located with that end in view. Others things being equal, it should be in the room that has the best natural light of any room in the house. His application will be hindered by many things that he cannot control. The telephone, the unseasonable caller, the interruptions of the household; such things are always with us. If we add the necessity of doing our reading and our study in a poorly lighted room we add another and wholly unnecessary strain upon our application.

It is important to preserve the atmosphere and spirit of a workshop in the study. The only quarrel I ever had with a parsonage committee was to prevent them from making my study into one of the show rooms of the parsonage. Their desire was commendable but misdirected. A study is a workshop. In a workshop tools often lie around in a seemingly careless way. But the disorder of a workshop may be

the disorder of construction, it is sometimes the disorder of convenience. A study doesn't need to be picked up every morning. It doesn't need rocking chairs nor soft couches nor domestic furbelows nor folderols. It is a place to work and it is important to keep the atmosphere of work in it.

Books for Backgrounds

The preacher needs books to create backgrounds. When I was a lad working at the forge and dreaming of some day becoming a preacher, a kindly friend gave me a book. I have forgotten pretty much everything about that book but its title. That title was *Humanics.* I have looked in every dictionary I ever owned to find a definition of that word. I have never found it. Yet it surely was the title of that book. Reading for backgrounds is reading in humanics. It is reading in all the pathos and sublime of human life. It is reading for mastery of all the springs and impulses and outreaches and sensibilities of the soul of man. It is reading to learn what the human spirit is capable of; how high it can fly, how deep it can dive, how wide it can range and what fare can sustain it.

I have a friend who is always studying preachers. He travels widely and wherever he is on Sunday he goes to church. He is in Great Britain about half of his time. I once asked him how the average American preacher compared with the average British preacher. He paused for a moment and then he said, "The British preachers' backgrounds are richer." Then he paused again and after a moment said, "Too often you American preachers give one the impression that you are telling us everything you know of the subject you are treating; while the English and Scotch preachers give you the impression that they know ever so much more than they are saying." Then he changed his figure of speech and said, "Their undertones are better." I have quoted one friend; let me refer to another. We were schoolmates. When we began our ministry he was my envy and despair. He knew so much more theology than I did. He was a graduate of one seminary, post-graduate of another, had a special course in a third, and for one day a week he went for a year to a fourth. He was rich in divinity. He had a fine presence, a pleasing voice and a good head. In twenty-five years he has had thirteen appointments. He never remains in one church more than three years, and six times he has stayed only one year. I often wondered what the explanation was. Last winter I was in his study and I thought I could see. He was overloaded on Divinity and desperately short on "Humanics." Among a thousand or twelve hundred books I could find only four books of fiction. One of them was *Pilgrim's Progress.* The only poetry I could find was *The Methodist Hymnal* and Foster's *Cyclopaedia of Poetical Illustrations.* Whole ranges of human interest were not represented in his reading at all. Such mental fare would make any man hard to listen to.

A Living Illustration

May I refer to a living illustration of rich backgrounds. His name is Arthur John Gossip. Read one of his sermons and note how un-

dertones play through. It is not that he quotes so much; when he does he often quotes inaccurately. But his reading plays through his sermons like heat lightning through the summer sky. Poets, moralists, preachers, scientists, philosophers, agnostics, dramatists and apostles all stand just at his shoulder. He will summon one of them, and then indorse or dismiss him in a single line of such pertinence and beauty that it shines like a jewel. It would be a liberal education to run down his casual references and seemingly careless quotations. He is never pedantic and never literary and never somebody else.

He is always Gossip, and you feel when you read him that you are dealing with a universal man. He has ranged everywhere, sailed all seas, explored all continents, gathered metals from all hills, honey from all flowers, grain from all fields, and fish from all seas. He illustrates what rich backgrounds can do for preaching.

Books for Preparation

The preacher's second use for books is books for preparation. To me this time-honored phrase is something of a misnomer. When I was a growing lad we had in our country church a preacher named Robert Brown. He was something of a scholar in Hebrew. He wrote some pretty stiff articles for the church papers on the value of the study of Hebrew to the preacher. He said something one day I have never forgotten. He said that he found that he always preached much better on Sunday if during the week he had spent about twenty hours digging Hebrew roots. When he said it, "digging Hebrow roots" seemed about as remotely related, in my mind, to preparation for preaching as anything could be.

I have found out what Robert Brown meant, though honesty would compel the confession that I have not dug three Hebrew roots in three years. He meant that he found preaching on Sunday more of a delight if during the preceding week he had spent some reasonable portion of his time in concentrated mental effort and exercise. Not simply reading, but studying, noting, comparing, analyzing, classifying—whipping all his mental powers into action. He did that "digging Hebrew roots." Another man may get the same results in quite another field.

A man may dig one kind of roots one year and another kind the next year. He may dig one sort for three months and another sort for the next three, but he ought to dig somewhere.

And what fields there are. Three months with Neander in Church History will toughen up the fibers of the mind in fine fashion. It will do more, it will give us some understanding of the influences that have united to make the Church what it is today. It will be severe exercise in digging to get it, but it will be rich plunder when it is ours.

Poetry: a preacher friend frequently says that the poets never interest him. His saying that is a perfect illustration of the unnecessary. No one would ever suspect that they did. Professor Olin F. Curtis said that in the poetry of Robert Browning one could come

closer to the whole reality of human life than he could in any scientific treatise published in the last hundred years. I once asked one of the leading preachers in our day what he did for the sixty minutes immediately preceding going into the pulpit. He said that he usually read the poets. I have seven of that man's books in my study. I have just looked them through again; there are not seven quotations from the poets in the seven books. But before he goes into his pulpit, where he has stood for many years, he drenches his mind with poetry.

I have made no reference to science, and philosophy, and history, and fiction, and drama; root-digging exercises in any of them is fine work. I have not mentioned the Bible. Why should I? If a preacher has not discovered the rich values there, he is hopeless.

An Illustration

I have mentioned one living preacher as an illustration of books for backgrounds. Let me mention another as illustration of books for preparation. Yet, now that I have come to doing it, I hesitate. I am restrained by considerations of propriety. If he were here he would forbid me. I am thinking of our own Edwin Lewis. I will say no more than this: a brave digger; an honest workman; a world of information at his command; a trained judgment; an accurate sense of proportion. For this sort of thing we must get past the reading of books; we must study them.

The Preacher and His Books

Did I say a preacher's books are his tools? Let me change the figure. They are his daily bread; they are sustenance for his heart, his mind, his spirit. Let me change the figure again: they are the source of his divine fire. Often he will come to them spent and exhausted, his torch gone out. They will kindle him again; they will set him on fire. The smoldering spark he holds, under their contagion, will burst into flame. Let me change the figure again: they are his unfailing spring of refreshing waters. The sun of a pitiless publicity beats upon him. He is every man's servant. The streets he treads and the roads he travels are dry and hot; they consume his moisture. His books are an unfailing spring of refreshing waters; they slake his thirst, rest his weariness, invigorate and inspire him. Let me change the figure of speech once more; a preach's books are his living, breathing, blessed companions. They will talk to him with companionable intimacy when he is lonely; chide him when he lags behind his best; banter him when he is thinking too much of his precious self; laugh with him at the idiosyncrasies and oddities of the human crowd; joust with him upon the mimic field of imagination, and sit with him in the cool of the day at the door of his tent like visiting angels. A preacher and his books. There's a subject for a Rembrandt, a Frans Hals or a Millet. No modish artist need attempt it; it will take a hand that paints from life.—*Christian Advocate.*

The Case of Dr. Macfarland

Announcement has been made that Dr. Charles S. Macfarland had offered his resignation as General Secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The action followed and was closely related to the disclosure that for a period of eighteen months he had been receiving "a moderate compensation" from the Motion Picture Producers' Association for services rendered in the way of reviewing films. He believed that these services were valuable both to the producers and to the public. In the opinion of the Policy Committee, however, this was reprehensible. The committee's judgment is given in a public statement by the President of the Federal Council, Bishop F. J. McConnell:

"1. The committee reports that, while accepting fully Dr. Macfarland's good faith in his course and in his explanation of that course, in its opinion Dr. Macfarland has committed a very great error in taking pay for services rendered the motion picture producers while acting as a salaried officer of the Federal Council, especially in view of the nature of the questions which had been aroused in the public mind about the motion picture industry at the time.

"2. The committee recommends that the Administrative Committee refrain from any pronouncement on the general question as to the relation of the motion picture producers to the Federal Council until the special report on the motion picture industry, now being conducted by the Research Department of the Council, is in the hands of the Administrative Committee.

"3. The Policy Committee further reports that it is quite certain that there are now no connections whatever between the staff of the Federal Council, or any member of the staff, and the motion picture industry.

"4. Under date of March 5, Dr. Macfarland, acting again entirely on his own initiative and without any pressure from the Policy Committee, placed in my hands his resignation as General Secretary of the Federal Council with a view to relieving the committee of embarrassment."

Doctor Macfarland, in a statement to the press, says:

"My relation was entirely confined to study and recommendations regarding religious films and those implicating religion, with special reference to the former caricaturing of the Protestant clergy, reflections on religion and religious workers and similar problems, my service being entirely that of criticism, counsel and advice."

The Christian Advocate is not in possession of sufficient facts upon which to form a clear judgment as to what action should be taken. Upon the secretary's own admission, however, he accepted the extra compensation for many months from the Motion Picture Producers without acquainting the officers or governing board of the Council with the fact. Granting that his motive was pure and high, we must concur with the Policy Committee (1) that such action was

a "serious error." What would the Wesleyan Association say if it were disclosed that the editor of Zion's Herald was receiving $150 a month from Amtorg; what would the Book Committee say if it should learn that the editor of THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE was on the payroll of the Association Against the Eighteenth Amendment. The editors might put in a plea of justification that they were rendering valuable services in return for the subvention. But they would have revealed a blind spote in their ethical retina which would irreparably impair their usefulness. Without reflection upon their moral integrity they would have disqualified themselves from further service. —*Christian Advocate.*

The Friends' Theory of Worship

BY W. W. COMFORT

The Quakers, or Society of Friends as they prefer to be called, number something over 100,000 members in this country, about 20,000 in the British isles, and have a scattering membership in other parts of the British empire and on the continent. It is evident that after nearly three centuries of existence the society cannot be charged with vigorous propaganda. Yet, the influence of this small religious denomination has been out of all proportion to its size. Instead of seeking proselytes, the society has maintained an energetic propaganda in favor of certain historic moral and humanitarian causes. Undaunted by imprisonments and social obloquy, it long ago brought about the sanction of an affirmation as a substitute for an oath in the courts and offices of the English-speaking world, thereby abolishing one of the most grievous disabilities which afflicted its members as responsible citizens. The society's part in promoting the political equality of the sexes, prison reform, the abolition of slavery, the responsible care of the Indians, the education of the Negro, the improved care of the insane, in working for temperance and peace, and in mitigating the horrors of modern warfare, are matters of general knowledge. The society's interest in these causes is due to the close relation felt to exist between professional and practice, between faith and works. British and American Friends have joined hands in expressing in practical works their humanitarian sympathy with all men everywhere.

Worship in Spirit

More important than these humanitarian "concerns" to the Friends themselves, because it is the source from which their motives spring, is their conception of worship. Here their theory is so different from that of other Christian denominations that few outsiders have made any attempt to understand it or practice it. Indeed, it should be stated at the outset, many Quaker communities have for local reasons in America drifted away during the past half century from the simplicity of the old meeting for worship and have approached closely to the methods of churches employing a pastoral system and a fixed form of worship. It is not necessary here to account for this transforma-

tion which so many meetings have felt constrained to adopt. It is permissible to speak of the Friends' meeting for worship in its nearer approach to the ideal of the society, and as it may still be found in England, in Philadelphia and among many other groups which have clung to the ancient practice so precious to the father. For if the Friends have any spiritual inheritance which is of significance to other seeking Christians today, it is precisely their conception of how God may be worshiped in spirit and in truth with the least possible intrusion of the human agent or of other distracting elements.

The Society of Friends has quite a complicated system of superior and dependent bodies for purposes of church government, corresponding roughly to the dioceses and parishes of other denominations. Each group recognizes the special gifts of some of its members by appointment as overseers, elders and ministers, the last mentioned having shown, in the judgment of the meeting, an acceptable gift in the ministry. All these appointments are made in the most democratic manner, "in open meeting," after careful and prayerful consideration. Needless to say, no spiritual gifts such as those just mentioned are compensated for by any salary. The annual financial requirements of each meeting are met by contributions from the members, the amount of which is suggested by an impartial committee appointed by the meeting.

Lack of Distractions

It must be understood, then, that a Friends' meeting consists of a certain number of families, often indistinguishable as members of their communities, who have inherited a certain democratic form of church government, an extremely simple theology, a generous solicitude for those who need help and sympathy, a concern to cherish simplicity, modesty and economy, and withal to live well within their means. Often without outward marks to distinguish them, the Friends have adhered everywhere to certain standards of life and ethics which have tended to make them avoid extremes: they are as rarely to be found in the highest places of worldly consideration as they are to be found in poorhouses and penitentiaries. Their occasional elevation to positions of responsibility in the state, as in the case of a John Bright or a Herbert Hoover, seems to prove, however, that the rarity of such an event is rather the result of an habitual abstinence from political activity than of any inherent incapacity for service to the state.

After having mentioned the Quaker concern for humanitarian causes with which the world is most familiar, and after having suggested that this concern springs from the very depths of their spiritual life, let us see how this life is sustained by their theory of public worship. It may be that in these days, when many Christians feel a lack of reality in more formal worship, help may come from a knowledge of the Quaker experiment in seeking the Divine. At its worst, a Friends' meeting will not offend anyone by an intrusion of distractions; at its best, it may offer, in the silence, that very real sense of God's presence for which so many Christians are seeking today.

For it is in silence that the congregation gathers and sits in expectation of an experience to satisfy the soul. If the silence is accompanied by weariness of mind or by distracted thoughts upon secular matters, the silence is spiritually *dead;* but if the silence is that of thirsty souls supported by concentrated and intelligent thought upon spiritual matters, then the silence is a *living* silence, from which will flow exhortation or supplication to the help or comfort of the hearers. The ministry which springs from such a silence is rarely doctrinal, dogmatic or controversial. It is exercised not for the personal satisfaction of the speaker, but is addressed under spiritual guidance to the help of the congregation.

The message may or may not be the result of previous meditation, but its delivery should be the result of present spiritual leading. Sermons are usually brief, and as many as half a dozen messages may be uttered within the hour with appropriate silent intervals for thought between them. They may be expository, narrative of a personal experience, or prompted by a feeling of praise and thanksgiving. Reading from the Bible in meeting is not usually practiced, though there is no objection to it. Consequently, Friends have emphasized Bible reading in the home and are probably more conversant with the language of the King James version, which they freely quote in their ministry, than are some of their fellow Christians. This knowledge serves them in good stead and often gives a quiet dignity to their utterances which might otherwise be lacking in extemporaneous exercise.

Opening and Closing Worship

Friends' meeting-houses are severely plain. There is nothing to distract the eye or the ear: no decorations, no flowers, no music, no collection. The meeting begins for each worshiper when he takes his place, and when all are seated and silence has ensued, the meeting is said to be "gathered." In the slightly raised galleries facing the congregation sit a few men and women whose office in the meeting carries with it this responsibility. The Friend who sits at the head of the meeting waits until he feels that the spiritual exercise of the hour has been completed, when he quietly shakes the hand of the one next to him and thus closes the session.

That meeting is most perfect when one central thought, variously developed and enlarged upon, seems to have seized upon the minds of all and lifted them up into a higher sphere of communion. Friends believe in "a continuing revelation" and believe that there is as good hope that God will speak here and now to the hearts of his waiting children as he did to those of old time. The contagious harmony of spiritual thought in such a congregation is a very real experience which is frequently noted. It is common to hear someone say after meeting that "when such an one arose to speak he quoted the very verse which had been occupying my attention." No one who is familiar with this phenomenon will explain it as the result of chance or as a miracle. It is a sound psychological truth. There is a spiritual unity

produced in silent worship which is a familiar experience to any Friend and which constitutes one of his dearest possessions. From a living silence, from a fertile meditation, then, there grows this spiritual communion which is the finest flower of Quakerism and which is full of help and inspiration to those who have experienced it.

Not for the Masses

It is necessary to refer to the probable necessity of training in this highly spiritualized form of worship. It is evident that we are dealing with a cooperative form of spiritual exercise. When unhappily there is a conscious waiting for human leading and the spoken word, when the individual is not exerting himself or is waiting to be ministered to by mere man, the result is not as it should be. The attitude, common and natural in many church services, of being led by an individual trained and appointed to promote worship is the very opposite of the ideal attitude in a Friends' meeting. Here the individual must deliver over his thoughts to the guidance of the Holy Spirit only, and this is an exercise of the mind in which many Christians have had little practice, and for which some would have no inclination. This lack of experience in concentration and of capacity for fruitful meditation explains why the masses have not, since the early days of the society, been reached by the Quaker practice of worship. It is unfortunately true that this power of concentration which is required in order to attain the highest degree of spiritual power in a Quaker meeting, constitutes a real barrier in the way of those who desire some definite artistic, dogmatic or ritualistic elements to fix their attention.

What some feel to be a serious lack in the Quaker theory of worship constitutes, however, its strongest appeal to many men and women of intelligence who have kept a place for spiritual exercise in their program of life, and who crave the opportunity for silent meditation upon the deep things of eternal importance in a world which well nigh sweeps us away with its inrush of the physical, the trivial and the temporal. Such people are accustomed to think deeply and with concentration upon whatever occupies their attention. It is to such that the Quaker experiment in silent worship may well appeal.

A Return to Primitive Christianity

There is something about this unaffected worship reminiscent of the primitive church. The simplicity in their meetings, which the present day Friends have inherited from their 17th century ancestors, is but one more of the numerous Protestant attempts to regain reality in the midst of formalism and ceremony. Friends are no longer opposed to music, or to the appeal of beauty in the other arts. They know that these arts are the handmaids of true worship in the case of most other communions. But for themselves they have desired throughout their history to allow no human agency or prepared program to come between them and the word of God, should it be vouchsafed to his waiting people.

In our day a silent opportunity for spiritual meditation is one of the rarest privileges of busy people. The churches which leave their doors open throughout the week serve as a welcome retreat for many in our noisy and distracting cities. The meetings of the Friends offer in like fashion an opportunity for retreat, but in this case an opportunity also for united worship with one's fellows, hence a more social and perhaps more fruitful experience.

Their extreme simplicity of public worship, together with their very slight emphasis upon theology, and their belief in the practical application of Christ's teachings to the social, business and political problems of the modern world, have brought the Friends suddenly and unexpectedly into favor with many thoughtful and intelligent Christians. No individual with a desire to feed his spiritual nature in the company of his fellows could well educate himself beyond the fold of the Society of Friends: he would simply bring to the collective spirit of the meeting for worship a richer and deeper knowledge of human experience; there would always remain for him a place of increasing service in a society which values and uses the talents of the educated layman. The more highly intelligent a group of worshipers may be, according to the Quaker theory, the better the meeting should be. Where everyone is a potential minister the average of education must be high.

It is by no means certain that the Quakers can rise to the opportunity which the society has today to minister to an increasing number of seeking Christians. They have lived on in comparative obscurity for so long that their talents for constructive leadership in spiritual matters are somewhat dulled. Not all those who should have done so have shared in the common responsibility for a living and effective ministry. But their welcome to other inquiring Christians, if less vocal than might be, is none the less warm and heartfelt. If they do not seek proselytes, they welcome all to share in the spiritual exercise of their meetings. They desire to furnish a democratic fellowship for those who seek them out, and to add to the concert of the Christian world their testimony in favor of a silent waiting upon the "voice within" which they believe still speaks directly to those who worship in spirit and in truth.—*Christian Century.*

France, the Spoiled Child

In the family of nations, the position of France may fairly be described as that of a spoiled child. As the object of worldwide sentimentality during and at the close of the war, there appears to have grown up in the soul of France the illusion that universal solicitude for her special protection should rightfully be the primary obligation of the entire international household. This is probably a milder characterization of French psychology than some observers would employ. There is not lacking sufficient evidence to warrant a characterization of France as the Germany of the post-war period. The demon of militarism having been exorcised from the body of Prussia, seems to have

taken up its post-war abode in the body of France. The psychology of that government more closely reflects the psychology of the kaiser's Germany than does that of any other first class power. The full disclosure of this state of mind is being made at the London conference, but London is only one more phase of a consistent development since the armistice was declared in 1918. The diplomacy of France has, from that moment forward, from Clemenceau to Tardieu, been following a straight line leading to its own security in terms of military force. All the peace idealism of this post-armistice period has been used as so much velvet with which French diplomacy has sought to cover the mailed fist.

It is time to use plain language. The spirit of good will and the hope that things would turn out for the best in the long run have kept the organs of public opinion in the United States and England from frankly discussing the impression France has been making upon the rest of the world. But the attitude which her representatives are taking at the London conference makes the restraint of hope and patience no longer possible. It is no longer to the interest of world peace to keep silent. And it would be the most salutary thing that could happen to France herself if she could be made to feel the universal condemnation of her policy which world opinion up to this time has kept decently concealed.

Casting the eye backward to the Paris conference and the Versailles treaty, one recalls the blood and iron policy of Clemenceau, who successfully withstood the more pacific conceptions of war settlement advanced by Woodrow Wilson, eventually drawing Wilson himself into the scheme of a punitive peace, despite the solemn promises of the allies that the basis of settlement was to be the President's fourteen points, including the levying of no indemnities upon the defeated foe. Avoiding the term "indemnities," France succeeded in laying a preposterously huge claim for "reparations" upon Germany. She accepted the League of Nations' covenant under the most cynical protest only after wringing from President Wilson his consent to recommend to the senate a defensive military alliance between Great Britain, France and the United States. In order to establish in the treaty of Versailles a legal basis for the collection of the "reparations" indemnity, Clemenceau dictated an article in which Germany was made to confess the sole guilt of starting the war.

While the Versailles treaty was being formulated, France was already beginning to negotiate a series of mutual assistance treaties with the new government of Poland and other neighbors of Germany, and to create the Little Entente, by means of which French power ultimately drew a military ring around her vanquished foe. Reinforced by these alliances, France accepted her place in the League of Nations with a show of devotion unexcelled by any other nation. But most realistic observers know that her zeal for the league has all along been actuated by the assurance that, with her European alliances, she could control its policies, and by the ignoble hope that the league itself might be utilized on a grand scale to underwrite her security with

universal military protection. The Geneva protocol of 1924 was chiefly of French origin and altogether inspired by French policy, though the designs of France were abetted by Great Britain and a number of American internationalists. The Geneva protocol was the most ambitious instrument ever devised for the concentration of military power in the hands of a political group. It reflects the French conviction that, if the League of Nations could by the terms of the protocol be thus transformed into a huge military machine, the control of the machine would rest securely in the hands of France. The final repudiation of the scheme by Great Britain was a terrific blow to French ambitions.

Falling short of the loaf, French diplomacy then struck out to secure half a loaf. And it succeeded. The treaty of Locarno is in essence the Geneva protocol limited to a specific region. By it Great Britain was drawn into an agreement to defend France against a German attack and Germany against a French attack. It sounds quite impartial, but its impartiality is in word only. Everyone in England, and in Germany, too, knows that France is the only real beneficiary under such a pledge. Even if France should attack Germany it is inconceivable that England's interest would ever allow her to help Germany to defeat France and thus increase British insecurity in relation to Germany.

At the Washington conference in 1921, it was France who blocked the extension of naval limitation to all classes of ships and compelled adjournment with only battleships touched. And now France comes to London demanding the right to build a navy of 720,000 tons regardless of the extent to which Great Britain and the United States reduce their navies, and declaring that the only consideration upon which she will yield her demand is that she be given yet another security pact! What the terms of this new pact may be has not been made known at this writing, but sufficient is known to show that the mind of the French government is incapable, apparently, of thinking of world peace except under the category of preponderant military force. The discarded Geneva protocol furnishes the model upon which the maximum desire of France is patterned. She would now like to have all the nations signatory to the Kellogg pact agree to join in military measures against a so-called "aggressor." This, of course, is nothing but the Geneva protocol over again. Failing this, France would like a Mediterranean Locarno, directed, this time, against Italy, as the original Locarno was directed against Germany. Failing in this, she might be willing to accept a mutual assistance pact signed by the five signatories to whatever naval agreement comes out of London.

All these proposals are impossible, France is being told, due chiefly to the absolute unwillingness of the United States to participate in any one of them, but also to the growing understanding in British opinion that this method of using war as an instrument against war is not a method of peace at all. The education of Ramsay MacDonald in a sound philosophy of peace has gone far since he championed the

Geneva protocol in 1924. In his radio address on Sunday, March 9, he declared that "bonds for war are not and cannot be a security for peace." The discussion of a political agreement to be attached to a naval agreement therefore seems to narrow down to two proposals: one is an agreement to consult in the event of a violation of the Kellogg pact; the other is an agreed upon "declaration of good will and pacific intention" as between the signatories to the London naval treaty. Against neither of these proposals could there be any valid objection by the United States, but it is felt (erroneously, as we believe) in the American delegation at London that an agreement to consult would be defeated in our senate. Whether it would or not, there is no sign that France would be satisfied with it. She wants an agreement with "teeth" in it. And "teeth" is just another way of spelling "war."

The French psychology was revealed in her objection to the use of the Kellogg pact as the basis of the London conference. This objection was made in a diplomatic note responding to the British invitation to attend the conference. It had been agreed by President Hoover and Premier MacDonald that the whole question of naval armament should be confronted in the light of the fact that the nations had given up war. But France was unwilling to negotiate on this basis. She could not argue either her ambitious program of naval development or her alternative demand for military protection through another security pact, if she consented seriously to the terms of the Kellogg pact. Therefore the peace pact was gently laid on the shelf at the opening of the conference, and the negotiations have proceeded as if we were still living under the war system. The tragic consequences which have flowed from the surrender of Mr. Stimson and Mr. MacDonald to the French point of view in this absolutely fundamental matter are in plain evidence in every day's dispatches from London. But the full injury to the cause of peace will not appear until the conference is over. America's pacific public opinion will not easily forgive Mr. Stimson for this colossal blunder in strategy. And unless President Hoover soon shows that he has in reserve some method of correcting the mistake of the American delegation he will forfeit the confidence of American peace lovers which for the past year he has commanded in the highest degree.

The fact is that France, of all the nations signatory to the peace pact, has been the least sympathetic with it. Her government was practically forced by diplomatic strategy into the acceptance of it. It is a great myth that France was the author of it. It is true that the pact developed out of a certain circumstance which had its origin in France. But the correspondence between Mr. Kellogg and M. Briand in 1928, clearly reveals that the latter was being forced by the American secretary of state into a diplomatic hole from which he could be extricated only by the acceptance of the multilateral treaty. In saying this, there is no implied reflection upon the sincerity of M. Briand, whose personal devotion to peace is not in doubt. But the national mentality of which he is the spokesman has never been permeated

with the new philosophy of international relationships of which the peace pact is the supreme expression. France has consistently sought to avoid taking the risks of peace. Whatever others might do, it has been her strategy to secure for herself, at others' expense, the utmost possible guarantees of force.

This national mentality of France is, of course, the product of her long history of warfare, and supremely of the late war. But it is also the product of the amazing tenderness which has been bestowed upon France since 1918. Having been the chief scene of the great conflict and the chief sufferer in respect of the devastation of her cities and fields and mines and industries, it was natural that th sympathy of the allies would go out to her by showing paramount consideration for her reconstruction necessities. The desires of France have been treated with profound consideration in all her international associations since the armistice. The inevitable result is that France has developed a mentality which regards such consideration as her right. She has become the spoiled child of the nations. At every turn she has played this role with such success that France is today the most prosperous country in Europe, if not in the world. She has no unemployment. Her devastated regions are more than reconstructed. Her gold reserve in London and New York is such as to peril world finance if it should be withdrawn. Her internal debt has been reduced to one-fifth its original amount by the stabilizing of the franc at less than five cents. She is receiving a constant stream of reparations money from Germany. And "Uncle Shylock" has recently settled her debt to him on the basis of 51 cents on the dollar.

Yet M. Tardieu had the face to suggest to Mr. MacDonald that perhaps the reason why Great Britain wishes to abolish battleships and submarines and limit cruisers was the cramped economic condition in which Britain now finds itself! The implication plainly being that France, having no such necessity, should be allowed to build as she pleases. M. Tardieu was talking to the premier of a nation which had forgiven France one-half of the debt incurred by huge borrowings during the war, and thousands of whose citizens had purchased French war bonds in vast sums and are now compelled to accept payment at one-fifth the original amount. If France is prosperous and able to snap her fingers at disarmament proposals, it is because she has been the beneficiary of a kind of international consideration which has no precedent in history. Much of this consideration is mixed with self-interest, it is admitted, but much of it is also due to the advantage which France has taken of the peculiar position in which she stands, both geographically and psychologically.

If France maintains her present attitude at the London conference, and prevents a real reduction in British naval strength, and thereby prevents a real reduction in the navies of the United States and Japan, and also thereby excites Italy to increase her building, there will be unspeakable bitterness in British, German and American hearts.

Book Review

NOTE—*Reviews, when not signed, are by the Editor.*
(When ordering books, please mention this Magazine.)

Three Reformers: Luther—Descartes—Rousseau, by *Jacques Maritoui*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, 234 pages.

The title of this book attracted us. To hear how these three great men broke new paths in the field of religion, philosophy and morality, and to be told how they differed, would indeed have been an interesting study. We were especially interested in the treatment Luther would receive at the hands of the author, who is a Frenchman. We had, however, not read far into the part devoted to Luther when we saw that the writer was wholly unable to understand the great Reformer or to do him justice. He has received his inspiration from Denifle and other defamers of Luther's personality, and it doesn't take him long until he has us thoroughly disgusted with his outrageous attacks upon the Reformer's life and motives. Coming at a time when, at least, the country of Luther's birth has witnessed a great renaissance of interest in its religious hero. The book shows convincingly the great gulf that separates Protestant and Catholic thinking now, in the 20th century as much as in the 16th.

Luther, so says the writer, had wisdom and tenderness but also an unbroken pride and peevish vanity. Reason was very weak in him (!) For Luther the whole point was to *feel* oneself in a state of grace—as if grace in itself was an object of sensation! He relied on his own strength to arrive at Christian virtue and perfection, trusting in his own efforts, in his penances, far more than in grace. He practiced the very Pelagionism with which he was to charge the Catholic church. . . . . He fights concupiscence, then he gives up the fight: "lust cannot be conquered," such is his practical conclusion. His experience is the classical story of the fallen monk. But do you think he is crushed by his experience? Not at all, he is on the threshold of freedom. Christ has paid for us and his justice redeems us. Salvation comes by faith only, that is, through confidence in Christ. Pecca fortiter and crede firmius: sin bravely, but believe still more! Now he has a doctrine, a school, is master and prophet and can win over all the impatient sensuality of the Germany of his day. (!)

Now he yields to the forces of instinct, he becomes subject to the law of the flesh. Observe the series of portraits of him, the last of which are surprisingly bestial. It does not lie in his power to live without a wife, so he marries a run-away nun.

For all of these revolting statements the writer gathers from Denifle's works quotations of the Reformer's works, which, torn out of their context, sound sometimes bad enough.

That "immense disaster for humanity," the Protestant Reformation, was only the effect of an interior trial which turned out badly in a religious who lacked humility (i e. Luther).

The author's whole conception of Luther seems to us corrupted by a twofold fanaticism, the violent hatred of the ultra-Catholic for the Protestant and of the war-time Frenchman for the "Boche."

The discussion given to the other two reformers, to Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, the man who put thought on the throne of the human mind (his famous dictum "Cogito ergo sum": I think, therefore I am), and to Rousseau, the "father of a new morality," do not seem to us very illuminating. Rousseau, the lover of nature, believed that all ills have come from man's leaving the simple state of his infancy and developing a civilization. Let him return to nature and he will return to health. His "back to nature" books have exerted a great influence. Still greater was the effect of his writings on politics. His "Contract Social," his idea that the state is of the nature of a contract between the people and their governors, that the sole authority of the state comes from and rests in, the people, was the leading principle of the French revolution and achieved therefore a while at least—a complete victory.

The same political teachings come to us through the writings of Tom Paine, the apostle of the Age of Reason and have found here a full and permanent acceptance.

The author finds some things he approves in Rousseau, but on the whole he is suspicious of him. Rousseau's Savoyard Curate is the "first modernist priest." He speaks well enough of the natural, but we need the supernatural. Without it man and society cannot be regenerated. With that Reviewer naturally agrees, but otherwise he has not found much in the book that he would heartily accept.

The Book Review makes a poor showing this time. The Reviewer is a sick man (nervous breakdown). He asks for the forbearance of his readers and hopes to be able to make up for present imperfections in subsequent numbers.—*Ed.*

Dr. Hodgson's "Essays In Christian Philosophy"*

Reviewed by the Rt. Rev. Henry St. George Tucker, D.D.
Bishop of Virginia

Professor Hodgson's latest book, *Essays in Christian Philosophy*, is much more important and interesting than its title would perhaps indicate. Serious students of theology are becoming rather weary of collections of essays. Those whose interest is primarily in the application of Christianity to practical problems may not be particularly drawn to a book on philosophy. These essays, however, are well worth the attention of both classes of readers. Some of them deal with deep problems of philosophy, others with such questions of current interest

**Essays in Christian Philosophy*, by the Rev. Leonard Hodgson, D.D., New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930, $3.50.

as Birth Control, Sin and Its Remedy, Sacraments, the Reunion of Christendom.

The value of the book does not consist in the fact that with such a variety of subjects every one can find something suited to his taste. Professor Hodgson's discussion of all these topics is indeed interesting and stimulating, but, as he says in his Preface, the chief claims which the opinions expressed in this book have to a hearing is due to their springing from roots in the central position arrived at in the two essays on Freedom.

Freedom of the unreflective mind seems to be the most obvious fact of everyday experience. Yet so great is the difficulty of finding a place for this apparently simple fact in any conception of the universe as a coherent whole, that many philosophers have felt obliged to look upon freedom as an illusion. This is notoriously true in the case of modern psychology. Its method of securing coherency in the universe is to reduce all events to the mechanistic level. Professor Hodgson's, while agreeing that there is no place for chance as an ultimate factor in the universe, criticizes the assumption that the only alternative is mechanistic sequence. Modern science itself has come to recognize the inadequacy of the mechanistic interpretation of the world order. Some other ground must be sought for the coherency of the universe and for that dependableness which we demand in the system of events. This at least leaves the way open for the Christian contention that the will of God is the true ground of rationality in the universe.

This interpretation, however, seems to leave the status of human freedom as uncertain as the other. If events are determined by the will of an omniscient and omnipotent God, what room is there for real freedom? Professor Hodgson suggests that if we assume God's purpose in creation to be the eliciting of perfect freedom through the spatio-temporal process, then there may be elements in this process which are intelligible as steps towards the attainment of that purpose, but which are "untranslatable into terms of eternal being except by actual transformation." This means that while human freedom has temporal reality, it must be transformed into perfect freedom or lost. To allow reality to freedom involves the possibility of its misuse. The Christian doctrine of the atonement shows us God's method of dealing with this contingency. The irrationality resulting from man's misuse of his freedom must be eliminated. This can be done only through divine and human self-sacrifice.

It is impossible in this brief review to give even a summary of Professor Hodgson's treatment of various questions of current interest in the other essays. They deserve to be widely read. He has the faculty of laying his finger upon the fundamental principles which are involved in any useful discussion of a subject, and in most cases he makes suggestions which are really helpful in removing difficulties and in arriving at a logical and at the same time practically worthwhile interpretation.—*The Living Church.*